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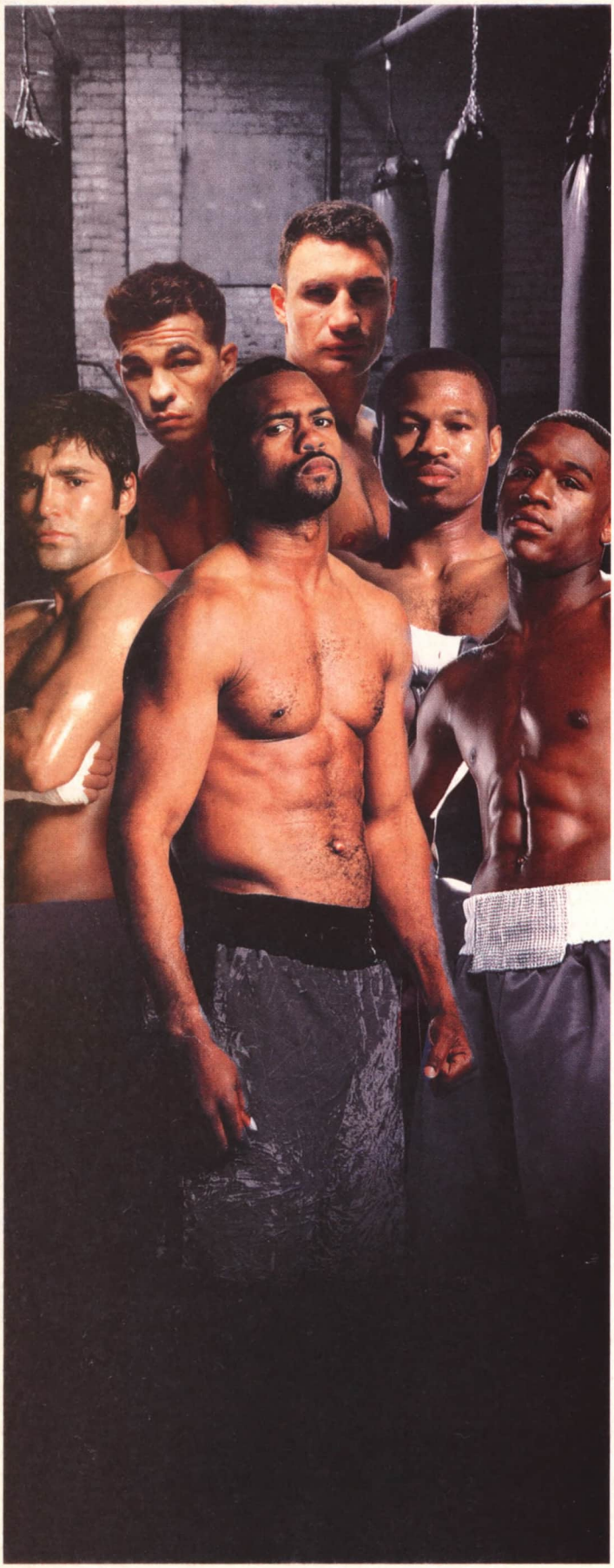

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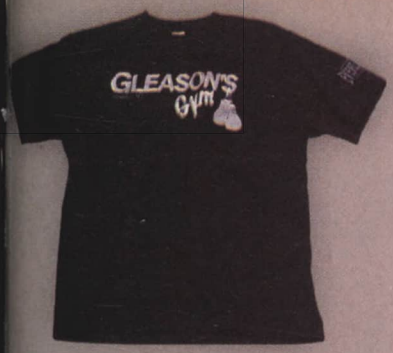

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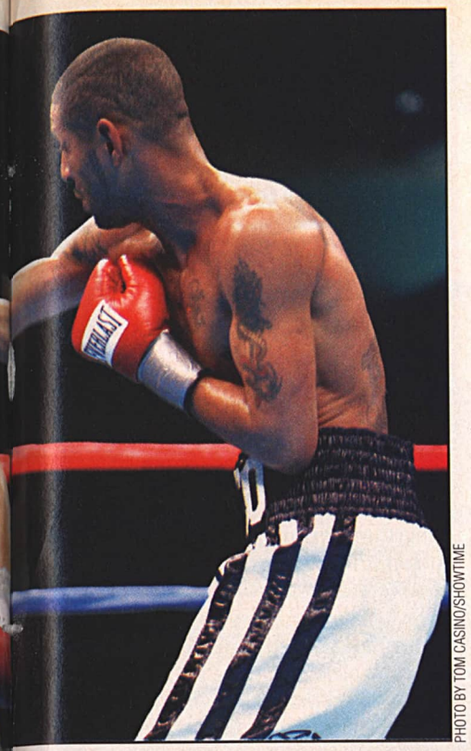

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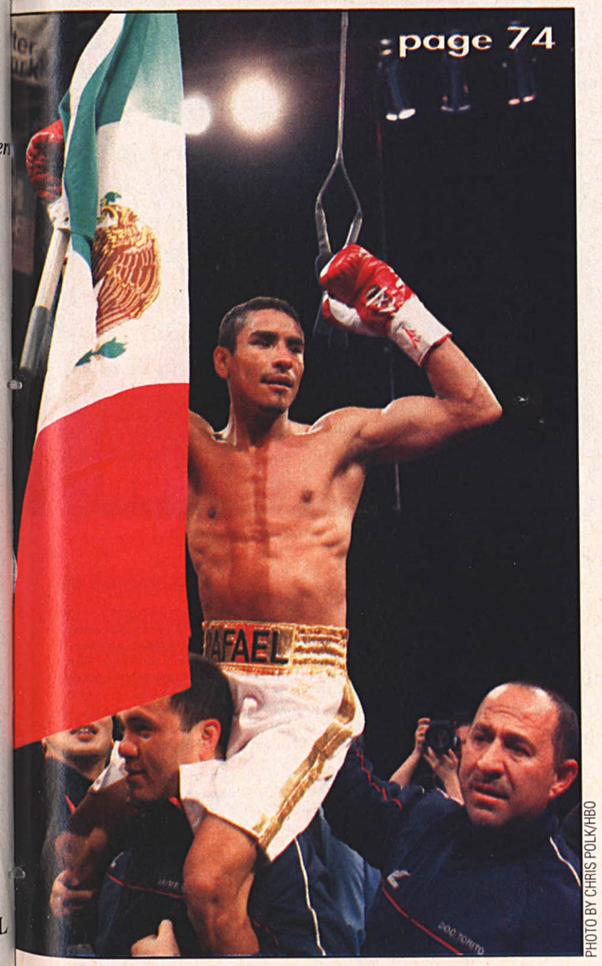

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RINGSIDE

There are certain things you can't take back, and sadly they are often the things you regret the most. My guess is that Acelino Freitas will come to feel that way about his surrender to Diego Corrales—if he hasn't already.

Maybe it's not fair, but when Freitas turned away and quit on his feet in the 10th round of the biggest fight of his career, he voluntarily joined that sad band of famous boxers who have forever stained their reputations by violating the warrior's code of never quitting. Unfortunately, regardless of what he does from now on, in or outside of a boxing ring, that stigma will haunt Freitas for the rest of his life and beyond.

Many would question the validity of such severe judgment. After all, Freitas had just gotten up from the third knockdown he'd suffered, and there was an excellent chance that Corrales was going to put him down again, and probably knock him out. Naturally, nobody wanted to see "Popo" seriously injured, so getting out before absorbing any more blows from such a murderous puncher was in many respects the sensible thing to do.

But anybody who thinks that professional boxing is a sensible activity hasn't been paying attention. I can't tell you how many times I heard a boxer say that you have to be a little bit crazy to be a fighter. If the participants recognize that fact, we'd be foolish not to.

The harshness with which fighters are judged is a legacy from our primordial past when virtually all fights were to the death, and whether we like to admit it or not, that link to our ancient heritage is a significant part of boxing's lingering appeal. Moreover, when modern boxing first took root in 18th century England, it was supported by many members of the establishment as a progressive alternative to dueling. And like a duel, a boxing match, regardless of any monetary reward, is also about honor.

Honor, of course, is an abstract concept, and what's honorable and what's not can vary, depending on time, place, and culture. But one thing that seldom varies is that when everything else is equal, the fighter with the greater strength of character will prevail.

This is not to suggest that Freitas is a coward. Nobody who climbs those ring steps and boxes deserves that label, but it's all relative. Corrales never quit when Floyd Mayweather knocked him down five times, nor when Joel Casamayor punched "Chico's" mouthpiece through his lower lip. And I don't think he would have quit if the roles had been reversed in his fight with Freitas.

Certainly, battling on when things start to go terribly wrong can be dreadfully dangerous, but it is also a much-admired quality in a fighter, one that sometimes leads to great glory. The truth of the matter is that some fighters really mean it when they say they would rather die than quit. Freitas wasn't ready to make that commitment. That doesn't make him any less of a man; it just makes him less of a fighter.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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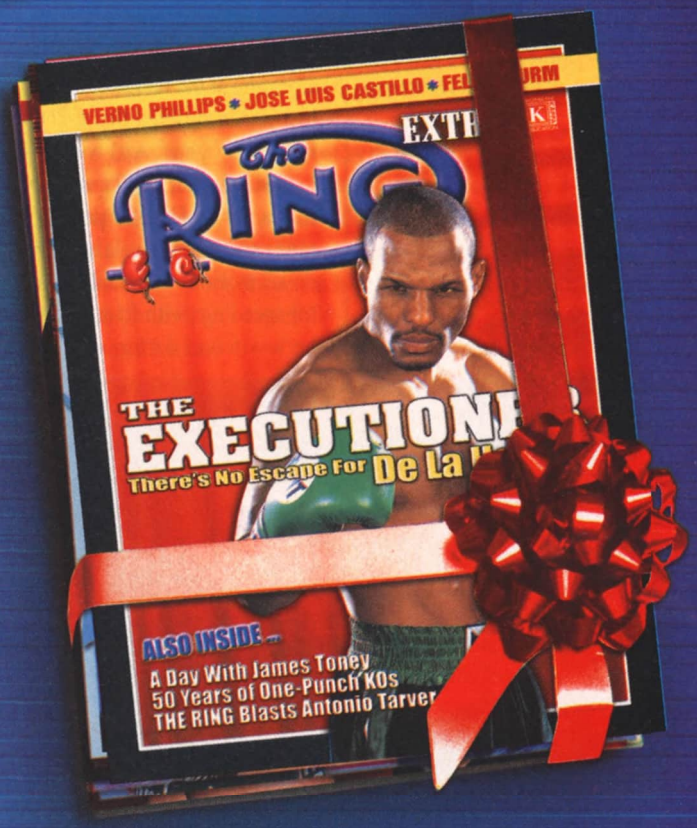

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ROUND ONE

AYALA BACK BEHIND BARS

It was a sad sight for anyone who remembered the promise of a gifted teenager named Tony Ayala Jr., seeing him at the age of 40, his physical prime long since wasted in a New Jersey prison cell, taking a beating at the hands of clubfighter Anthony Bonsante on April 25, 2003. But the 11th-round knockout loss Ayala suffered that night was nothing compared to the problems it would lead to. Ayala was finished as a fighter. And without boxing, it was only a matter of time until he was finished as a free man.

On July 28, Ayala, now 41, was sentenced to 10 years in prison by Texas State District Judge Maria Teresa Herr for probation violation. After spending 16 years—from 1983-'99—behind bars on a rape conviction, Ayala stayed out of trouble for a brief while, but received probation after being jailed on accusations of assaulting a 14-year-old girl in December '00. He was jailed again in November '03 for speeding (with four outstanding traffic warrants), and then was arrested once more in July '04 after he was found during a traffic stop to be in possession of drug paraphernalia and driving without a license or proof of insurance. Judge Herr, seeing Ayala for the third time in 18 months, had apparently reached her breaking point with the incorrigible "El Torito."

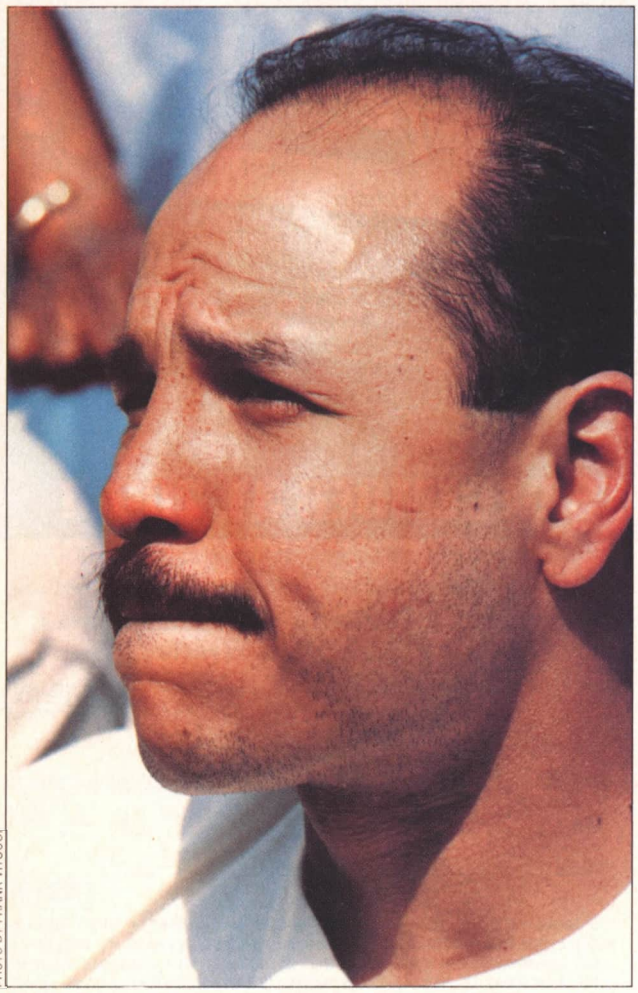


PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Ayala: Couldn't live the straight life

It all started to go sour for Ayala after he endured his first professional defeat, in a classic fight against Yory Boy Campas in July 2000. Less than one year into his improbable comeback, he was no longer unbeaten, and no longer in the hunt for a million-dollar payday. But he still had some fight in him, and put together four straight wins before the Bonsante disaster. After that, he knew it was over, and according to his probation officer, James Wheeler, he grew depressed and demoralized.

"He realized he wasn't as good as he once was," Wheeler told the *San Antonio Express-News*, "and he had a hard time with it … [Boxing was] really the only thing he knew. He really didn't have another marketable skill. There were jobs out there. He just wasn't used to having to look for one. Boxing was his life."

Ayala's personal life had also taken an unfortunate turn, his wife Lisa having divorced him not long after the incident with the 14-year-old girl. Ayala was also broke, and after losing his house and his car, he had to move back in with his parents. Wheeler said Ayala admitted to having an alcohol problem and to using heroin—the drug paraphernalia found in his car included syringes and a spoon with burn marks on it.

Back in '99, shortly after Ayala's release from prison, Patricia Castillo of the Benedictine Resource Center for Women said of Ayala, "He's been convicted of being violent toward women. Certainly, I don't have any hope of that behavior changing when he stays in a line of work that permits violence and promotes violence."

Ironically, it was when Ayala was forced to leave that line of work that his behavior worsened and he followed a self-destructive path back to the place where he'd spent most of his adult life.

—Eric Raskin

THE BEAUTY OF FORGIVENESS

As the famed 18th-century British poet Alexander Pope wrote in his masterpiece, *Essay On Criticism*, "to err is human; to forgive, divine." In the world of boxing, no two people exemplify this more than George Khalid Jones and Denise Scottland.

These two lives became intertwined through the most unfortunate of circumstances on the night of June 26, 2001, as light heavyweight Jones stopped Denise's husband, Beethavean Scottland, in the 10th round of their bout on the USS Intrepid Aircraft Carrier Museum in New York City. Beethavean collapsed into a coma as a result of the knockout, dying six days later. The tragedy left the widowed Denise to raise their two young sons on her own in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Though the victor, Jones also experienced his own personal hell after the bout. Wracked with guilt, he quit boxing for months. He and his wife, Naomi, tried several times to call Denise from their home in Paterson, New Jersey, to apologize, but would always hang up the phone before dialing the complete number, unable to figure out what to say.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Jones and Scottland meet in person for the first time

Finally, the phone rang at the Jones house one wintry day. It was Denise Scottland. She told George she held no malice toward him, as she understood the nature of the boxing game. From there, an unlikely friendship has developed between them.

"Denise is a special woman," said Jones. "She's now my biggest fan, and it was she who inspired me to get back into boxing."

Denise was on hand to root Jones on when he fought Darnell Wilson to a draw in Glen Burnie, Maryland, on August 3, 2004, at Michael's 8th Avenue, the venue where her husband fought so often on the "Ballroom Boxing" shows. Denise visited Jones in the dressing room after the fight, their first in-person meeting since the ill-fated bout of three years ago.

"I was nervous about it at first," said Jones. "But now I'm real happy I got to meet her, thank God." Said Scottland, "I know it was almost as rough on George as it was on me; I felt for him as much as for myself."

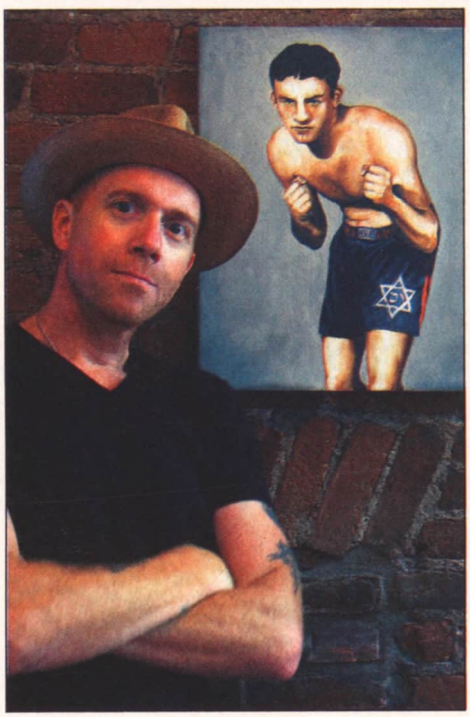
Courageous human beings, these two. From the ashes of tragedy has risen a bond that appears likely to last forever.

—Mike Greenhill

JEWISH BOXING EXHIBIT COMING TO PHILLY

An exhibit entitled *Sting Like A Maccabee: The Golden Age Of The Jewish American Boxer* will be on display at the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia from November 21, 2004, through the spring of 2005. Included will be paintings by the renowned artist Charles Miller, who specializes in portraits of Jewish fighters.

Jews helped promulgate the pro game in the years between World Wars I and II. By the late-'20s, nearly one-third of all professional boxers in the United States were Jewish, and they comprised the majority of ranked contenders. Between 1910 and 1939, there were 26 Jewish world champions. Among them were Maxie Rosenbloom, Benny Leonard, and Barney Ross. In 1933, Rosenbloom, Ben Jeby, Jackie Fields, and Ross, respectively, held the world light heavyweight, middleweight, welterweight, and lightweight titles.

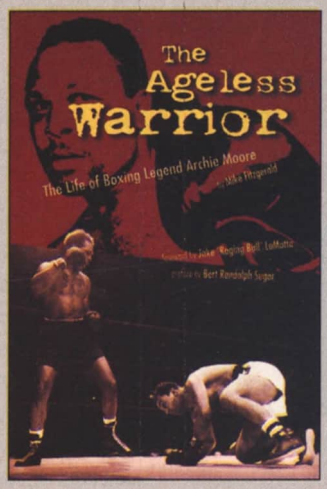


Artist Miller with his painting of Jackie "Kid" Berg

While these champions were great symbols of ethnic pride and immigrant aspiration, the inner-city ghettoes of New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia added a bumper crop of contenders and clubfighters, many of whom enjoyed immense local adulation. With the end of the Great Depression and the employment and educational opportunities presented by a booming post-war economy and the G.I. Bill, Jewish participation in the sport quickly waned. By the early-'50s, only a handful of Jews remained as active professional fighters.

Noted boxing historian Mike Silver of New York City, who often offers commentary on ESPN and HBO, is the curator for this exhibit. The museum is located in Independence Mall, 55 North 5th Street, Philadelphia. The Web address is: www.nmajh.org.

—Robert Mladinich



It has often been said that some men live such extraordinary lives, their stories would be discounted as implausible if they were adapted to fiction by even the most skilled novelist. Archie Moore, a man of uncommon ingenuity inside the ring and robust personality outside, lived that sort of life. Sure, Moore will long be remembered as a legend with an unrivaled claim to the most knockouts in boxing history, but a true portrait of the man speaks to a much more complex composition beyond that of a champion of the prize ring; he was a teacher, a globetrotter, an ambassador, a mentor, an orator, an actor, an entrepreneur, and an activist. In short, his life was manifest by possibility, and to read his story is to plunge deep into a heroic odyssey layered with so many remarkable accomplishments and experiences, it is an uncanny tale that some might argue easily writes itself.

In adopting sparing analysis or embellishment on the life of the "Ol' Mongoose," author Mike Fitzgerald, in his book, *The Ageless Warrior: The Life Of Boxing Legend Archie Moore*, (Sports Publishing L.L.C., 271 pages, hardcover, $24.95) would seem to agree. The author and co-author of several books on boxing, Fitzgerald proves himself to be a meticulous documentarian when it comes to recounting the facts of Moore's life and astonishing boxing career. In fact, Fitzgerald's strength is arguably the book's greatest weakness. While the anecdotes are plentiful and entertaining, we are provided with little penetrating insight into the mind of one of boxing's most unusual and erudite personalities. Instead, Fitzgerald simply elects to let the facts speak for themselves with anything passing for deeper exposition derived from secondary sources.

The book moves swiftly though the details of Moore's birth in Mississippi, his impoverished early life in St. Louis, and his enrollment in the Civilian Conservation Corps, where his childhood fascination with boxing began to firmly take root. At the arrival of the third chapter, however, when the author begins to chronicle a boxing career that would eventually number 229 contests, Moore's story seems to be bogged down for many chapters by page after page of scrupulously researched fight reports.

For the fan with an insatiable appetite for minutiae, there is plenty here to digest. Fitzgerald does an enviable job of chronicling well-traveled territory, including Moore's defeat of Joey Maxim for the light heavyweight title and his slugfest with Rocky Marciano. And, of course, Moore's bracing off-the-canvas victory over Yvon Durelle is retold with a requisite drama that will never grow tiresome.

But readers unfamiliar with the breadth of Moore's story may find accounts of his travels to Australia and Argentina, where he forged a lifelong friendship with the famous dictator, Juan Peron, equally, if not more, compelling. Similarly fascinating is Fitzgerald's depiction of Moore's life after his retirement from the ring. Sought after as an adviser and trainer by the likes of George Foreman, Moore never strayed far from boxing's subculture and earned a well-deserved reputation as a sagacious tactician and strict disciplinarian. But perhaps an even more telling commentary on Moore the man can be found in the work he did as a spokesman for the NAACP, and the creation of his own organization, Any Boy Can, in which Moore counseled and mentored countless underprivileged youths.

For a life of such startling diversity and epic longevity, Fitzgerald manages to keep it all interesting, and the net effect is an excellent primer for anyone looking to familiarize themselves with Moore's saga.

—Paul Salgado

Just when you thought that every possible variation of the *Rocky* theme had already been explored, along comes *Black Cloud*, a new movie about a Native American boxer who battles racial prejudice, evil rodeo riders, and law enforcement officials on his way to victory in the ring.

The movie was written and directed by actor Rick Schroder, who was inspired by a story he'd read about a Navajo boxing coach and his son. Unable to find financial backing in Hollywood, Schroder eventually persuaded several tribes to become his partners, which marked the first time multiple tribes came together to support a film.

A number of Native American actors appear in the movie, including Eddie Spears, a Lakota Sioux, who plays the title role, and Russell Means, who portrays Spears' mentor and boxing coach. Overall, it's a highly eclectic cast that also includes country singer Tim McGraw as the local sheriff, Wayne Knight (more than 100 pounds lighter than when he played "Newman" on *Seinfeld*) as a smarmy government agent, and Schroder as the movie's chief villain. Then there's Julia Jones, who plays Spears' girlfriend, an exotically beautiful actress who is of Asian, black, and Indian heritage.

As in most boxing movies, the majority of Spears' problems come outside of the ring, where he is haunted by the knowledge that he is of mixed blood and angered by the harsh social condition on the reservation. There are plenty of predictable trials and tribulations along the way before he earns a shot at making the U.S. Olympic team, and

***Spears as the title character in* Black Cloud**

that's the main problem with *Black Cloud*—predictability.

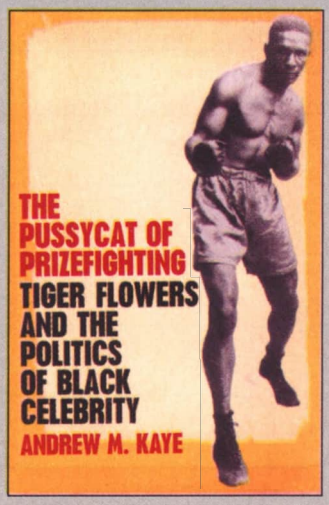
Schroder, who was eight years old when he made his film debut opposite Jon Voight in a 1979 remake of *The Champ*, has filled his film with a string of boxing-movie cliches and trite dialogue. The fight scenes are typically over the top, featuring the exaggerated violence first popularized in the *Rocky* series, which is especially inappropriate in a movie about amateur boxing.

Counterbalancing the movie's flaws is its exploration of Native American culture and solid performances by the actors.

"It creates a positive image that celebrates the magic of Indian heritage," said Means, "[and] it shows Indians as human beings with their flaws and tribulations."

While *Black Cloud* will never make my list of the best boxing movies of all-time, it has an innocent charm and sincerity that saves it from being just another *Rocky* knockoff.

—Nigel Collins



When Tiger Flowers beat Harry Greb for the middleweight title in 1926 and became the first African-American to hold a world boxing championship since the hated Jack Johnson was run off 11 years earlier, William Randolph Hearst's *New York Daily Mirror* reported the result beneath a three-quarter page article about the public hanging of a black man in Delaware. But the Bible-toting, incessantly polite and demure "whitest black man in the ring" was the anti-Johnson, and Flowers' place in both the white and black cultures of his era is the focus of *The Pussycat Of Prizefighting: Tiger Flowers And The Politics Of Black Celebrity* (University of Georgia Press, 208 pages, hardcover, $26.95), an intriguing and thorough examination of the history of race in prize fighting. It ranges from bare-knuckle to modern times, and its focal point is the career of the man even Johnson himself once wished he had been more like outside the ropes.

Hardcore fans looking for a blow-by-blow account of Flowers' fights will have to do their own digging, for author Andrew M. Kaye is an academician who uses just two pages to go from Flowers' title-winning match against Greb to, 10 defenses of it later, his curious loss of it by decision to Mickey Walker (which Kaye seems pretty certain was a fix, with Flowers' manager, Walk Miller, and maybe even Tiger himself in on the deal).

There are, therefore, some long, arid stretches of sociological and anthropological terrain that might test a reader's will; but they are broken up by rich oases of Flowers lore and information. Kaye writes very well and generally treats his subject with even-handed respect if not admiration, although his suggestion that Flowers "was not entirely worthy of canonization" apparently hinges on a couple of car accidents and Tiger's mild disgruntlement over a decision rendered against him in the ring once.

If nothing else, Kaye's excellent, absorbing study whets the appetite for more about this great fighter and laudable man whose life and odd death—like Greb a year before him, Flowers died after what was supposed to be a slam-dunk operation to remove scar tissue from around his eyes—cry out for additional explication.

—Pete Ehrmann

"The Fight" was more than just a fight, back on June 22, 1938. It was a clash of ideologies, and of two men, Joe Louis and Max Schmeling, forever linked. The *American Experience* series gives viewers a multi-layered look at what went on around both Louis and Schmeling in the riveting documentary entitled *The Fight*, scheduled to air on October 18 on PBS.

The film begins with the first Louis-Schmeling fight, in 1936, and then peels back the history of the two men, focusing on how the first fight supplied the foundation for the second confrontation.

Director and writer Barak Goodman does a fabulous job in exploring the racial attitudes of the time in America, along with explaining the background of a world on the brink of global upheaval thanks to Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime.

In the middle of everything are Louis and Schmeling, two symbols of their people, as well as two reluctant prisoners of politics. The film portrays Schmeling as Hitler's pawn, and focuses on Schmeling's great ability to adapt to any situation. It depicts Schmeling as someone willing to carry out Hitler's bidding, telling Americans that things weren't as bleak in Germany under Hitler as Americans thought.

The Fight also concentrates on Louis donning the mask of "the good Negro," someone who had to be presented as a champion "non-threatening to white society, white dominance, or white values."

The common bond between both Louis and Schmeling was boxing. It gave Schmeling great wealth and celebrity, while enabling Louis to reinvent himself and leave behind the perceived slow, stammering kid from the Alabama cotton fields.

Narrated by actor Courtney Vance, *The Fight* provides a little something for everyone—from history buffs to boxing fans.

—Joe Santoliquito

PBS documentary explores Louis' lambasting of Schmeling

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
7-20-04	Jorge Lacierva KO 6 Jesus Perez	ESPN2	jf	B-	C-	C+
Got to hand it to Perez; when a guy has an attitude even when getting bounced around the canvas, he's tough						
7-23-04	Brian Minto KO 10 Vinny Maddalone	ESPN2	h	D+	B+	B+
Now how's Maddalone going to afford that 1986 blue IROC-Z he's been eyeing?						
7-23-04	Oleg Maskaev W 10 David Defiagbon	ESPN2	h	C+	B	C
Defiagbon the oldest looking 34-year-old prospect we've ever seen						
7-24-04	Jesse James Leija W 10 Panchito Bojado	HBO	w	B+	B+	B+
Against the right guy, Leija still a joy to watch; Bojado has nothing to be ashamed of						
7-24-04	Arturo Gatti KO 2 Leonard Dorin	HBO	jw	A	A	C+
We don't want to sound, um, selfish, but we believe we're owed some blood here						
7-27-04	Edner Cherry KO 5 Antonio Ramirez	ESPN2	l	C+	B-	B
Nothing like a little chaos to get things going; this warrants a rematch, and soon						
7-30-04	Nelson Dieppa W 12 Ulises Solis	PPV	jfl	B	B	D+
This was no barnburner, but if you want to say the worst Solis deserved was a draw we wouldn't argue with you						
7-30-04	Laila Ali KO 9 Monica Nunez	PPV	sm	C	D	D-
Can you imagine the star Ali would be if she were Muhammad's son rather than his daughter?						
7-30-04	Danny Williams KO 4 Mike Tyson	PPV	h	B+	C+	A
You waited too long to grow up, Mike; now it's too late						
7-30-04	Javier Jauregui W 10 James Crayton	Telef	jw	B-	C	B
If you like bodyshots, this was the place to be; good, tight scrap						
7-30-04	Emmett Linton W 10 Dorian Beaupierre	ESPN2	m	C+	B	C+
Anyone else think Beaupierre's manager is out to get him beaten up?						
7-31-04	Ivan Calderon W 12 Roberto Leyva	PPV	s	B+	C	C+
Against the division's elite, we sense Calderon's utter lack of pop will be a factor						
7-31-04	**Rafael Marquez KO 3 Heriberto Ruiz**	**PPV**	**IBF b**	**A**	**B**	**B-**
When we're looking back at knockouts of the year, this will be near the top of the list						
7-31-04	**Erik Morales W 12 Carlos Hernandez**	**PPV**	**WBC/IBF jl**	**A**	**B**	**B+**
Is it possible that, at age 27, Morales is just now hitting his prime?						
8-3-04	Darnell Wilson D 10 George Jones	ESPN2	lh	C	B	C+
Another two rounds and this might have been a kayo win for Wilson						
8-5-04	Juan Urango D 12 Mike Arnaoutis	Show	w	C+	B+	A-
Good stuff; if not for Pacquiao-Marquez, this is the draw of the year so far						
8-5-04	Samuel Peter W 10 Jovo Pudar	Show	h	C+	B	D+
We'd have liked to see a knockout from Peter, but we'll give him a pass—just this once						
8-5-04	Marco Antonio Rubio KO 7 Jeffrey Hill	HBO L	jm	C+	B	C+
Good win for Rubio, but Hill not sturdy enough to provide a true test						
8-6-04	Norberto Bravo W 10 Gustavo Corral	ESPN2	w	C	B-	C+
So do the judges get together beforehand and draw straws to decide which one gets to tally the really ridiculous score?						
8-6-04	David Lopez W 12 Kirino Garcia	ESPN2	m	B-	C+	C
Someone should get in Garcia's ear soon and let him know he's taken it as far as he can						
8-7-04	Diego Corrales KO 10 Acelino Freitas	Show	l	A	A+	B+
The better fighter won here, even if you think Popo would have been better off punching rather than boxing						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World/Alphabet title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox Sports Net; Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo; HBO L—HBO Latino

YOU CAN'T KEEP A GOOD SHOW DOWN

Like a fighter rallying from the brink of a knockout defeat, ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* has staged a surprising comeback in recent months. The July 30 telecast, which featured Emmett Linton outpointing Dorian Beaupierre, as well as Buster Douglas as the studio guest, was the network's most-viewed boxing program in two years. With 752,466 U.S. homes tuning in, it garnered a .9 rating.

Many industry insiders trace the turnaround at *FNF* back to March 2004, when Doug Loughrey replaced Bob Yalen as ESPN's top boxing executive. The change at the top also meant that consultant J Russell Peltz gained greater influence in the decision-making process.

Peltz, who was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in June, believes that two factors have been instrumental in the comeback.

"I think having different fighters in the studio every week has helped a lot," said Peltz, "and the fights have been better. Even when they haven't been exciting, we haven't had any embarrassing fights, like when Jermain Taylor fought Alex Rios in January."

Still, it hasn't been easy, as the fee paid to the promoter is currently $15,000 per show, compared to $50,000-$60,000 doled out in the past. It took a while for promoters and fighters to readjust their financial expectations, but they seem now to have woken up to the harsh realities of the current market.

The best news of all, however, is that the *Friday Night Fights*, which broadcast its final show for the year on September 3, will be back on the air January 21, 2005, with 40 shows scheduled for the coming year.

—Nigel Collins

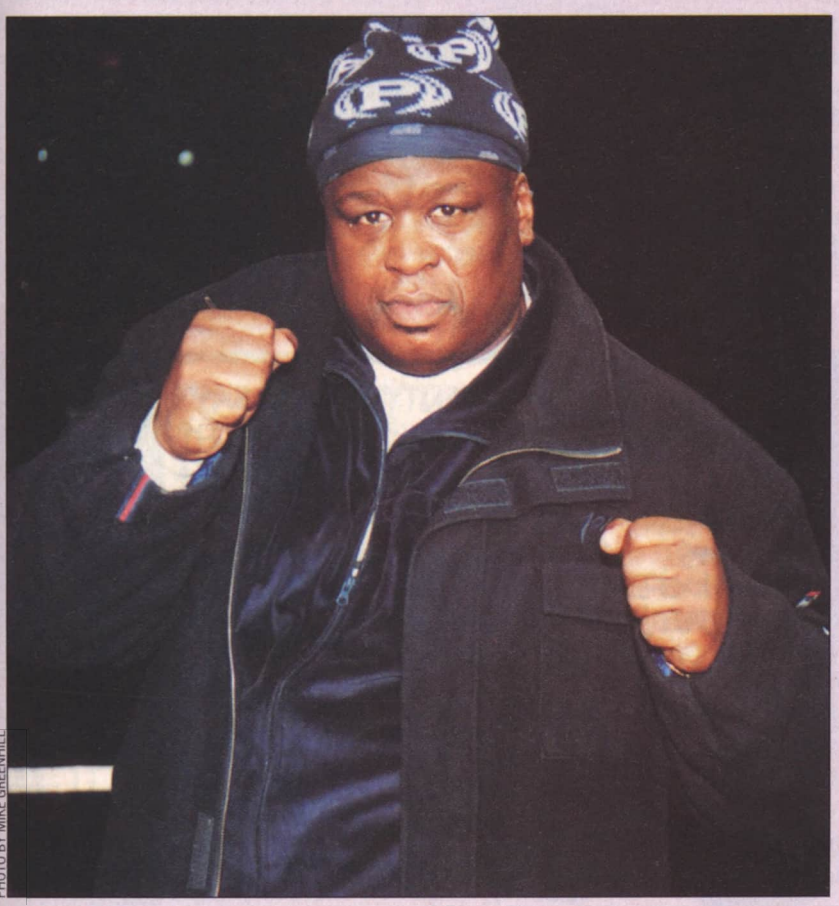
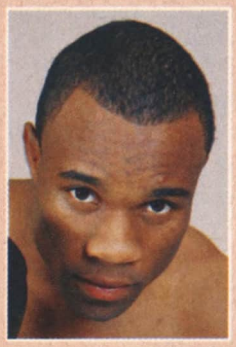


PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

With Douglas co-hosting, ESPN's ratings ballooned

OUTSIDE THE ROPES



Harris: Drops Finkel, hires Steward

2000 Olympic silver medalist **Ricardo Williams** was indicted in mid-August on charges of conspiracy and possession with intent to distribute cocaine, and was reportedly on the lam as of press time. If found and convicted, the failed prospect could face a prison sentence of 10 years to life ... Junior welterweight contender **Vivian Harris** was in the news quite a bit in late-July, and not only because he turned down a reported career-high $750,000 payday to face **Ricky Hatton** in England. He also underwent a managerial makeover, parting ways with **Shelly Finkel**, and signing on with **Emanuel Steward**—who will also work Harris' corner in addition to managing him ... Steward added another name to his managerial stable a couple of weeks later, in early-August, when he announced that he'd signed **Ronald Hearns**, the son of famed Steward fighter **Thomas Hearns**, to a multi-year deal. The 25-year-old middleweight was 3-0 (2) as of press time ... Another signing to report: Former bantamweight beltholder **Wayne McCullough** signed a promotional contract in early-August with Goossen-Tutor Promotions. McCullough and Goossen-Tutor's **Dan Goossen** worked together in the past, when both were affiliated with America Presents in the late-'90s. McCullough, 34, last fought in March '03, when he lost a unanimous decision to **Scott Harrison** ... **Tony Holden** resigned as heavyweight **Joe Mesi's** promoter in early-August, and gave no specific reason—leading many in the media to suggest that Mesi's indefinite suspension for reported problems with his MRI scans seemed a likely factor ... In potentially a landmark case regarding the contracts between promoters and fighters, **Art Pelullo** and Banner Promotions won their appeal in early-August of a District Court's ruling in favor of Banner fighter **Antwun Echols**. In Echols' contract, as in many fighters' contracts, minimum purses were established, but were subject to renegotiation if Echols lost a fight—which he did in September 2003, against **Anthony Mundine**. Echols had filed a lawsuit challenging that provision, but a United States Court of Appeals in Philadelphia disagreed with the original verdict, ruling that Banner still has exclusive promotional rights to Echols and that clauses allowing for renegotiation after a loss should be upheld ... In another decision reversal in early-August, the regional court of Hamburg, Germany, found in favor of the fighters in the case of the **Klitschko** brothers vs. their longtime promoter, Universum. According to the ruling, the Klitschkos' contracts ended on April 30, 2004, but Universum still has the right to appeal that decision ... The honors keep coming for 2004 Hall of Fame inductee **Azumah Nelson**. In mid-July, the Ministry of Environment and Science conferred the title "Environmental Ambassador" upon Nelson, in recognition of the environmental conservation work "The Professor" had done in his native Ghana ... 1940s welterweight **Tommy Lemmon** died of cancer at the age of 82 in mid-July. Lemmon, whose promising ring career was put on hold in 1942 when he enlisted in the U.S. Army three days after upsetting veteran **Baby Breese**, enjoyed his career highlight in '46 when he decisioned future Hall of Famer **Fritzie Zivic**, but freely admitted he wasn't nearly as good a fighter then as he was before the war. He retired in '48, with an unconfirmed record of 16-2-1.

Nelson: Thinking globally and acting locally

THE PUNCHLINES

"Solis says he wants to beat me and take the belt back to Mexico. The only way my belt will ever wind up in Mexico is if I go on vacation there and take it with me."

—Nelson Dieppa, prior to his junior flyweight title defense against Ulises Solis, which he would go on to win by majority decision

"I'm gonna set up a ring in the parking lot, put four cars together. I want all you reporters to go ahead and fight each other right now. The winner can ask me any question he wants to."

—James Toney, laying down the rules at a press conference

AL KRATZER'S VIEW

"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Middleweight
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Junior Welterweight
3. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Light Heavyweight
4. **ROY JONES**
   Light Heavyweight
5. **WINKY WRIGHT**
   Junior Middleweight
6. **ERIK MORALES**
   Junior Lightweight
7. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Featherweight
8. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
   Featherweight
9. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Middleweight
10. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
    Junior Welterweight

(For period ended August 11, 2004)

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Joe Mesi (10th last issue) departs due to the fact that he is indefinitely suspended in all states because of his uncertain medical condition. He is replaced by previously unranked Danny Williams, who is coming off a kayo of Mike Tyson. If Mesi is eventually cleared to fight, THE RING will re-evaluate his status.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No changes this issue, but THE RING will recognize the winner of the October bout between Wayne Braithwaite (currently number one) and Jean-Marc Mormeck (currently number two) as the world cruiserweight champion.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Veteran Jesse James Leija returns at number 10 thanks to his upset win over Francisco Bojado, displacing Junior Witter (10th last issue).

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Diego Corrales (ranked first at junior lightweight last issue) takes over the top contender spot at 135 pounds on the strength of his knockout of Acelino Freitas, who falls from third to fifth. Steve Johnson sinks from second to sixth because of inactivity, and Juan Lazcano slips from first to second to accommodate Corrales' advancement. Julio Diaz (fourth last issue) and Juan Diaz (fifth last issue) each climb one rung, to third and fourth, respectively. The realignment at the top also causes everybody rated sixth or below to drop one place each, which forces out Isaac Hlatshwayo (10th last issue).

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: With Corrales now campaigning at lightweight, Erik Morales (third last issue) moves into the number-one position following his win over fifth-ranked Carlos Hernandez. Yodsanan Nanthachai jumps from sixth to fourth thanks to his win over Steve Forbes. Corrales' move also allows everybody rated seven through 10 last issue to advance one slot each and makes room for Robbie Peden to come aboard at number 10.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Heriberto Ruiz (eighth last issue) exits following his knockout loss to top-rated Rafael Marquez. Ruiz' departure allows Silence Mabuza (ninth last issue) and Ricardo Vargas (10th last issue) to improve to eighth and ninth, respectively, and opens up space for Jhonny Gonzalez at the 10th position.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No changes.

POUND-FOR-POUND: No changes. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended August 11, 2004

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Yodsanan Nanthachai advanced two spots at 130 pounds by decisioning Steve Forbes

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled in one of two ways: by unifying all three alphabet titles in a division; or by winning a box-off between THE RING'S number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: VITALI KLITSCHKO
Ukraine 34-2 (33)

1. **CHRIS BYRD**
Flint, MI 37-2-1 (20)
2. **JOHN RUIZ**
Methuen, MA 40-5-1 (28)
3. **JAMES TONEY**
Ann Arbor, MI 67-4-2 (43)
4. **HASIM RAHMAN**
Baltimore, MD 39-5-1 (32)
5. **MONTE BARRETT**
Queens, NY 30-3 (6)
6. **ANDREW GOLOTA**
Poland 38-4-1 (31)
7. **FRES OQUENDO**
Puerto Rico 24-3 (15)
8. **LAMON BREWSTER**
Los Angeles, CA 30-2 (27)
9. **JAMEEL McCLINE**
Port Jefferson, NY 31-3-1 (19)
10. **DANNY WILLIAMS**
England 32-3 (27)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: WINKY WRIGHT
St. Petersburg, FL 47-3 (25)

1. **SHANE MOSLEY**
Pomona, CA 39-3 (35)
2. **KASSIM OUMA**
W. Palm Beach, FL 19-1-1 (13)
3. **VERNO PHILLIPS**
Aurora, CO 38-8-1 (20)
4. **FERNANDO VARGAS**
Oxnard, CA 24-2 (22)
5. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 58-5 (40)
6. **DANIEL SANTOS**
Puerto Rico 28-2-1 (20)
7. **TRAVIS SIMMS**
Norwalk, CT 23-0 (18)
8. **RODNEY JONES**
Lafayette, LA 33-3 (22)
8. **J.C. CANDELO**
Colombia 27-6-3 (19)
10. **BRONCO McKART**
Monroe, MI 47-5 (31)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: MANNY PACQUIAO
Philippines 38-2-2 (29)

1. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 42-2-1 (33)
2. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
Mexico 58-4 (41)
3. **SCOTT HARRISON**
Scotland 22-2-1 (12)
4. **INJIN CHI**
South Korea 29-2-1 (18)
5. **MANUEL MEDINA**
Mexico 63-14 (29)
6. **ROCKY JUAREZ**
Houston, TX 21-0 (14)
7. **ZAHIR RAHEEM**
Tulsa, OK 25-1 (15)
8. **DERRICK GAINER**
Pensacola, FL 39-6-1 (24)
9. **MICHAEL BRODIE**
England 35-2-1 (23)
10. **CHRIS JOHN**
Indonesia 34-0 (19)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **OSCAR LARIOS**
Mexico 52-3-1 (35)
2. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico 36-3 (27)
3. **MAHYAR MONSHIPOUR**
France 25-2-2 (16)
4. **JOAN GUZMAN**
Dominican Republic 21-0 (17)
5. **JOSE LUIS VALBUENA**
Venezuela 24-3-1 (14)
6. **SALIM MEDJKOUNE**
France 43-5-1 (21)
7. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG**
Thailand 36-1-1 (19)
8. **JORGE LACIERVA**
Mexico 26-5-4 (18)
9. **ART SIMONYAN**
Glendale, CA 14-0-1 (7)
10. **SERGIO MANUEL MEDINA**
Argentina 18-0 (10)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 32-3 (29)
2. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM**
Thailand 44-1-2 (31)
3. **JOHNNY BREDAHL**
Denmark 55-2 (26)
4. **RATANACHAI VORAPIN**
Thailand 57-8 (39)
5. **GENARO GARCIA**
Mexico 31-4 (19)
6. **CRUZ CARBAJAL**
Mexico 24-12-1 (20)
7. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan 23-4-3 (14)
8. **SILENCE MABUZA**
South Africa 16-0 (15)
9. **RICARDO VARGAS**
Mexico 36-10-3 (11)
10. **JHONNY GONZALEZ**
Mexico 24-4 (22)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
   Guyana 21-0 (17)
2. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK**
   France 30-2 (21)
3. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England 43-12-2 (28)
4. **O'NEIL BELL**
   Atlanta, GA 22-1-1 (21)
5. **KELVIN DAVIS**
   Reno, NV 21-2-1 (16)
6. **CARL THOMPSON**
   England 32-6 (24)
7. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
   Philadelphia, PA 15-0 (8)
8. **VIRGIL HILL**
   Bismarck, ND 49-5 (23)
8. **DALE BROWN**
   Canada 31-3-1 (20)
10. **PIETRO AURINO**
    Italy 29-2 (13)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: ANTONIO TARVER
Orlando, FL 22-2 (18)

1. **ROY JONES**
   Pensacola, FL 49-2 (38)
2. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
   Hungary 20-0 (13)
3. **GLENCOFFE JOHNSON**
   Miami, FL 40-9-2 (27)
4. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
   Huntington Beach, CA 36-2 (22)
5. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany 48-1 (38)
6. **CLINTON WOODS**
   England 35-3-1 (21)
7. **FABRICE TIOZZO**
   Franco 46-2 (30)
8. **STIPE DREWS**
   Croatia 26-0 (12)
9. **THOMAS ULRICH**
   Germany 27-1 (19)
10. **RICO HOYE**
    Detroit, MI 17-0 (14)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales 37-0 (30)
2. **MANNY SIACA**
   Puerto Rico 18-4 (16)
3. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
   Australia 20-2 (15)
4. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA 30-5-1 (26)
5. **DANNY GREEN**
   Australia 18-1 (17)
6. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA 40-9 (28)
7. **MADS LARSEN**
   Denmark 45-2 (37)
8. **ROBIN REID**
   England 37-4-1 (27)
9. **CRISTIAN SANAVIA**
   Italy 33-1 (12)
10. **SYD VANDERPOOL**
    Canada 35-2 (23)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 44-2-1 (31)

1. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
   England 39-1 (35)
2. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Los Angeles, CA 37-3 (29)
3. **FELIX STURM**
   Germany 20-1 (9)
4. **ROBERT ALLEN**
   Atlanta, GA 36-5 (27)
5. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. 34-3-1 (25)
6. **JERMAIN TAYLOR**
   Little Rock, AR 21-0 (16)
7. **MASELINO MASOE**
   New Zealand 26-2 (25)
8. **KINGSLEY IKEKE**
   Canada 20-1 (10)
9. **SAM SOLIMAN**
   Australia 27-7 (9)
10. **RAYMOND JOVAL**
    Netherlands 32-3 (14)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: CORY SPINKS
St. Louis, MO 33-2 (11)

1. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
   Mexico 30-3 (21)
2. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA 35-2 (26)
3. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 31-2 (22)
4. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
   Denmark 34-0 (26)
5. **MICHELE PICCIRILLO**
   Italy 42-2 (26)
6. **MANUEL GOMEZ**
   Mexico 25-10-1 (18)
7. **KERMIT CINTRON**
   Reading, PA 24-0 (22)
8. **JAWAID KHALIQ**
   England 23-1-1 (13)
9. **CARLOS BALDOMIR**
   Argentina 40-9-6 (12)
10. **TEDDY REID**
    Adelphi, MD 22-6-1 (16)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: KOSTYA TSZYU
Australia 30-1 (24)

1. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 55-3 (31)
2. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ 38-6 (29)
3. **VIVIAN HARRIS**
   Brooklyn, NY 24-1-1 (16)
4. **RICKY HATTON**
   England 36-0 (26)
5. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Grand Rapids, MI 32-0 (21)
6. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
   Washington, D.C. 28-3-1 (16)
7. **OKTAY URKAL**
   Germany 34-2 (10)
8. **MIGUEL COTTO**
   Puerto Rico 20-0 (16)
9. **LOVEMORE NDOU**
   Australia 38-7-1 (24)
10. **JESSE JAMES LEIJA**
    San Antonio, TX 47-6-2 (19)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JOSE LUIS CASTILLO
Mexico 50-6-1 (45)

1. **DIEGO CORRALES**
   Sacramento, CA 39-2 (32)
2. **JUAN LAZCANO**
   El Paso, TX 33-3-1 (25)
3. **JULIO DIAZ**
   Coachella, CA 30-2 (22)
4. **JUAN DIAZ**
   Houston, TX 25-0 (12)
5. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil 35-1 (31)
6. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 35-3-1 (17)
7. **JAVIER JAUREGUI**
   Mexico 48-11-2 (34)
8. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
   Uzbekistan 36-1 (22)
9. **JULIEN LORCY**
   France 56-3-2 (41)
10. **LAKVA SIM**
    Mongolia 19-4-1 (16)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ERIK MORALES**
   Mexico 47-1 (34)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
   Miami, FL 31-2 (19)
3. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Mexico 40-3 (28)
4. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
   Thailand 43-2-1 (35)
5. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ**
   Bellflower, CA 40-4-1 (24)
6. **JORGE BARRIOS**
   Argentina 41-2-1 (29)
7. **ORLANDO SALIDO**
   Mexico 20-8-1 (13)
8. **CASSIUS BALOYI**
   South Africa 29-1 (16)
9. **MIKE ANCHONDO**
   La Puente, CA 25-0 (18)
10. **ROBBIE PEDEN**
    Australia 24-2 (13)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **KATSUSHIGE KAWASHIMA**
   Japan 26-3 (18)
2. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. 44-3 (28)
3. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
   Venezuela 25-0 (24)
4. **LUIS PEREZ**
   Nicaragua 22-1 (14)
5. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
   North Korea 30-3-1 (8)
6. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 28-1-1 (22)
7. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
   Mexico 26-1 (16)
8. **FELIX MACHADO**
   Venezuela 22-5-1 (11)
9. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia 31-4-1 (21)
10. **JOSE NAVARRO**
    Los Angeles, CA 20-0 (8)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand 52-2 (28)
2. **LORENZO PARRA**
   Venezuela 23-0 (17)
3. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia 29-0 (22)
4. **MZUKISI SIKALI**
   South Africa 28-4-2 (17)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina 16-0-2 (10)
6. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
   Australia 21-0 (16)
7. **BRAHIM ASLOUM**
   France 16-0 (6)
8. **HUSSEIN HUSSEIN**
   Australia 25-1 (19)
9. **LUIS MALDONADO**
   Mexico 28-0 (20)
10. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
    Japan 22-2-1 (9)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: ROSENDO ALVAREZ
Nicaragua 32-2-2 (21)

1. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico 36-3-1 (27)
2. **VICTOR BURGOS**
   Mexico 37-13-3 (22)
3. **BEIBIS MENDOZA**
   Colombia 29-2 (23)
4. **NELSON DIEPPA**
   Puerto Rico 21-1-2 (12)
5. **PICHIT SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 30-2 (14)
6. **FAHLAN SAKKREERIN**
   Thailand 50-4-2 (20)
7. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Colombia 35-3 (21)
8. **ULISES SOLIS**
   Mexico 14-1 (10)
9. **ROBERTO VASQUEZ**
   Panama 16-1 (14)
10. **HUGO CAZARES**
    Mexico 18-3-1 (14)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **YUTAKA NIDA**
   Japan 16-1-3 (8)
2. **EAGLE KYOWA**
   Japan 13-0 (5)
3. **DANIEL REYES**
   Colombia 34-1-1 (29)
4. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 31-2-1 (19)
5. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela 20-3-1 (10)
6. **IVAN CALDERON**
   Puerto Rico 20-0 (4)
7. **JUAN LANDAETA**
   Venezuela 15-2-1 (13)
8. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 50-2-3 (17)
9. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
   Indonesia 48-7-3 (21)
10. **ISAAC BUSTOS**
    Mexico 22-6-3 (11)

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

THE MIKE TO LIKE

It's a good thing boxing writers never listened to Mom, Dad, and the elementary school teacher when that tongue-lashing trio of authority figures was delivering the classic "If-you-can't-say-anything-nice-about-someone-don't-say-anything-at-all" lecture. Had that advice been taken to heart, Mike Tyson's name wouldn't have appeared on a printed page for the past 13 years. Think about it: Was there ever any positive news mixed in with the rape conviction, knockout losses, lawsuits, cannibalism quotes, hotel lobby brawl, and bankruptcy filing? So many dark clouds, and all of them with lead linings.

Now comes the latest sour development, and what a biggie it is. To the surprise of several media geniuses (myself included) that thought Tyson's next alphabet coronation was inevitable, Leg-Iron Mike was halted in four rounds by Danny Williams in July. Halted and, you could say, finished as a superstar. Sure, Tyson will wage war again. For him to have any hope of getting out of debt, he'll have to remain active. As a matter of fact, it's easy to envision him becoming the heavyweight Roberto Duran, carrying on into his 40s, losing to guys not worthy of wrapping his hands, and not caring how much he tarnishes his ring reputation or becomes a carnival sideshow attraction.

Tyson at his peak, training for his 1988 fight with Michael Spinks

However, as far as once again becoming a box office powerhouse on top of the heavyweight heap (make that heavyweight *junk* heap), forget it. No matter what happens in a Williams rematch, Tyson has shown that he's shot. He can no longer maintain that perpetual-motion style for more than a round or two, take a punch, or summon any real desire. So we might as well consider this his career epitaph.

Let me do what the Democrats and Republicans proved incapable of doing in their TV ads, though, and avoid going negative. Tyson's antics in the second two-thirds of his career have certainly made the mere mention of his name a cause for rolling the eyes and shaking the head disapprovingly. And, admittedly, my mind is conditioned to always think the worst when he's involved. (A recent *New York Post* headline, "Tyson Set For Rehab," had me immediately wondering if the human train derailment was now battling drugs. As it turned out, the story was about Tyson's recovery from surgery to repair the torn meniscus in his left knee.) It kind of makes one forget the reasons he ever appreciated Tyson in the first place.

And believe me, there were plenty.

For starters, he came along at a time in the mid-'80s when the heavyweight division, the fight game's glamour weight class, was about as appealing as a $20 hooker with bad acne leaning against a graffiti-covered garbage dumpster on a 95-degree day. Though the linear crown was passed from Larry Holmes to Michael Spinks six months after Tyson turned pro, blobs, slobs, and con jobs like Greg Page, Tony Tubbs, Tim Witherspoon,

Pinklon Thomas, Trevor Berbick, Tony Tucker, and Bonecrusher Smith all laid claim to one alphabet strap or another during the first 26 months of Tyson's career.

While most fighters view fractured championships as gifts from heaven that are meant to provide greater opportunity, Tyson the historian hated them. "One pope, one president, one heavyweight champion," he said, and he went about returning that simplicity to the universe. There was a lot of cleaning up to do at his sorry workplace, and to the eternal gratitude of even the most virulent Tyson-haters, the kid got the job done without sustaining so much as a busted lip. No other heavyweight would have inspired HBO to pick up the check for a title-unification tournament, one that ended with Tyson beating Tucker to unify the crown for the first time in *nine years*.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Even at his worst, you could count on Tyson to keep swinging

During his heyday, Tyson made his challengers get into better shape than they would have against the Berbicks and Pages for fear of leaving the arena in a body bag if they dared enter the ring in poor condition. It was like the good old days of the heavyweight division again—at least at the very top.

Do you want to know why, despite all of the antics and anti-social behavior, Tyson will always have a certain amount of my respect and admiration? Because he did it his way, even if his way bore no resemblance to the way everyone else was doing it. He flouted the holiest of boxing canons. You name it and Tyson did it "wrong." He fought angry, never worrying that his rage would distract him or cloud his decision-making. He didn't warm up to the point of dripping sweat (in fact, he often didn't have a droplet on him when the opening bell rang), yet didn't fear that he'd get caught cold. He led with uppercuts, didn't pace himself, and loaded up on *every* punch. And still, it worked out for him.

Other sports have embraced the throwbacks craze, constructing new stadiums that look like the ballyards of the past, or holding turn-back-the-clock nights that feature the old uniforms and logos. Boxing, though, bears little resemblance to the sport of yesteryear. Except when it comes to Tyson.

No socks and no robe. Basic black. For a while, even a Jack Dempsey haircut. Tyson devoured boxing history, watching as much black-and-white footage as he could from the huge collection of films his co-managers, Jim Jacobs and Bill Cayton, owned. Tyson sometimes held poses in the ring that he'd seen the all-time greats execute. It was fun to watch him work out and realize that the self-proclaimed baddest man on the planet was preparing for multi-million-dollar events with just a jump rope, a heavybag, and a speedbag. Meanwhile, other big men with half his credentials were running from the Nautilus machine to the Cybex to the computer that was printing out how many simulated sit-ups they were supposed to be doing on some other space-age piece of equipment.

Tyson was a heavyweight who fought like a middleweight. He combined speed and power and punched in combination, including a right to the ribs followed by a right uppercut to the chin that was as punishing a one-two as anything landed since the days of Rocky Marciano. Tyson was also one of the few figures in any sport that, during his or her prime, truly lived up to the hype. A single-minded assassin? That sure seemed like more than just talk the night he punched a hole right through the dressing room wall moments before punching an even bigger hole through Spinks.

At his best, which was before Don King took over as his puppeteer, Tyson was great with the media. And surprisingly accessible. We sat for lengthy one-on-one interviews a couple of times during that stretch when he was the Michael Jackson of the sports world. He could be very funny in those settings, self-deprecating or quick to fire the verbal hook to your gut. "You're *how* old?" he once said to THE RING's photographer, "You look a lot older than that. I guess that baldness f---ed you up."

Tyson brought boatloads of money to the sport, and even reminded the often-forgetful Madison Avenue that the Sweet Science exists, landing a Pepsi commercial in prime time. (If you don't realize how rare that is, just remember how *Muhammad Ali* couldn't get a better gig than a roach spray commercial for years.)

Through all of the ugliness, Tyson retained a following because he always guaranteed that he'd be trying for a knockout with every punch, would never dog it, and was willing to take on anybody, no matter the opponent's physical advantages or hardware collection. Was Tyson good or bad for his sport? The answer is that he was both. Ultimately, though, the game was lucky to have had him. Let's just hope that his Hall of Fame induction speech comes in five or six years, not 14 or 15. And that he's not slurring his words when he delivers it. ■

DIGGING DEEP

By Ivan Goldman

A MESS OF MAGOOS

If they at least had the decency of cockroaches, incompetent boxing officials would scatter when we flip the lights on. Instead they do their dirty work under the glare of national television without shame or fear of consequences, because there aren't any.

To keep them all straight, we sort their grievous acts into categories: hometown decisions, Las Vegas decisions, dumb decisions, Don King decisions. And now Lou DiBella decisions. More about that later.

I know it gets frustrating to read Magoos month after month and see no progress. It's frustrating at this end, too. Because the situation seems to be worsening, I decided to let Magoos take over the entire space this month. All the monkey business cited I saw personally on TV, and I don't see everything.

MICHIGAN: Junior welters, Muskegon, ESPN2.

After the judges' split decision for homeboy Courtney Burton over Emanuel Augustus, cops should have cordoned off the scene in yellow tape and begun hardcore interrogations. Out-of-control referee Dan Kelley should have been led away before then—certainly by the end of round eight, when he cautioned Augustus, apparently for getting *hit* by three successive rabbit punches. I wish I were kidding about this call. Those of you who saw it know, sadly, I'm not.

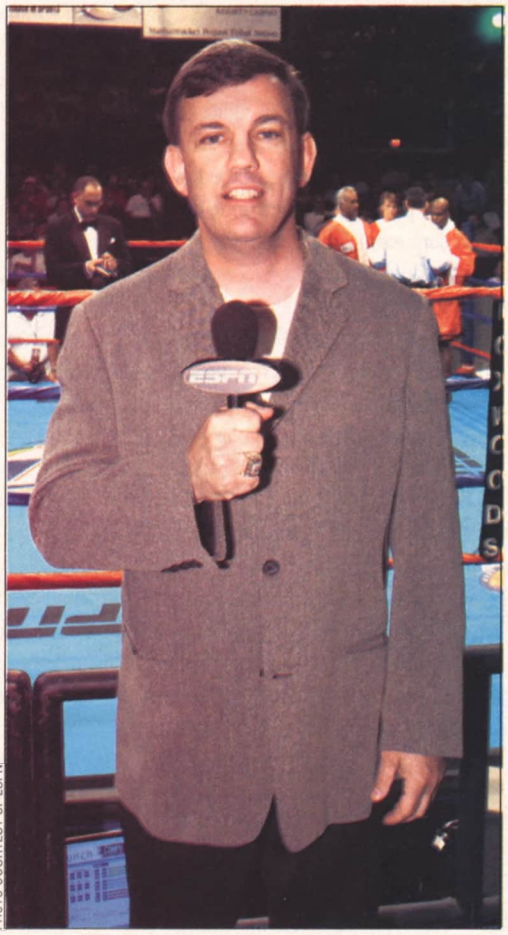


PHOTO COURTESY OF ESPN

ESPN's Atlas was appropriately hard on the buffoons in Michigan

Judges Robert Paganelli and Ed Mosley, who scored it 99-90 and 97-92, respectively, for Burton, should be fitted with ankle monitors that release bed lice whenever they get near a boxing ring—and sometimes even when they don't.

Earlier this year, the BBC reported that some Romanian witches put a curse on a Swiss soccer referee who made a couple of questionable calls. This sounded like an idea we could use, but I couldn't find Romanian witches in the Yellow Pages, so I went with the bed lice instead.

Judge Jack Richards, who turned in a realistic score of 98-94 for Augustus, deserves the opportunity to judge bigger fights. ESPN2's Teddy Atlas had it 97-92 for Augustus. I had it a bit closer at 97-93.

It was downright chilling when Atlas unmasked a commission member who didn't know the difference between a majority decision and a split decision, confirming our worst suspicions. In baseball, that would be tantamount to a commissioner not knowing the difference between a base on balls and a single. Actually, if officials were this atrocious in baseball, the major leagues would disappear inside of five years.

The Boxing Writers Association of America, a mostly East Coast band of scribes that now counts me as a member, tried to get somebody in Michigan to launch an official investigation. Don't expect one, at least not a real one.

TEXAS: Featherweights, Houston, HBO.

Referee Robert Gonzalez, another unhinged official, did everything he could for the hometown fighter short of whacking his out-of-town opponent with a shovel, or, as Don Rickles did to a blackjack cheat in *Casino*, zapping him with a cattle prod.

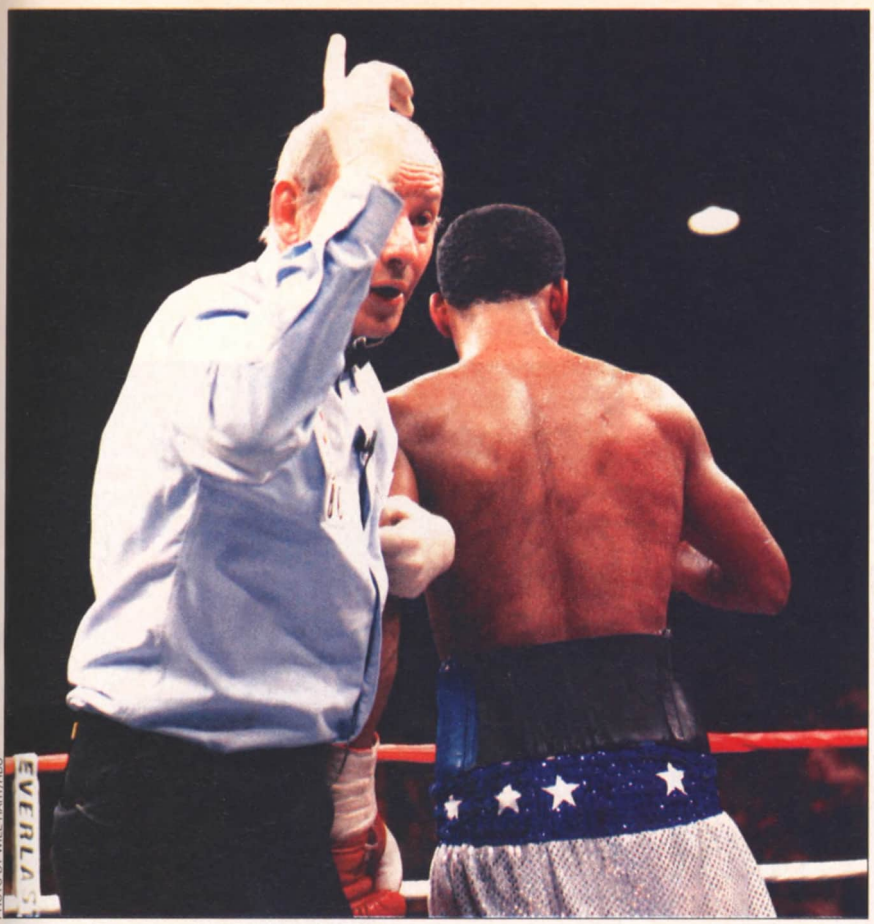


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Referee Gonzalez taking away one of the three points he docked Raheem against homeboy Juarez

Deducting three points from Zahir Raheem for holding Rocky Juarez behind the head in clinches was like sending a jaywalker to the electric chair. If he's not hitting while holding, what's the big deal? The second point was taken after Raheem's glove rested on Juarez's neck for about as long as a cat will sit on a hot stove. No punch was thrown.

Gonzalez also gave Juarez a license to kill, never cautioning him once for anything. But Juarez, like Raheem, is basically a clean fighter, so he didn't take advantage.

Scoring this fight was like trying to take an exam with a stink bomb under your chair. The referee was so intrusive and over the top that it's impossible to know who actually deserved the victory, which, given the three-point gift, of course went to Juarez.

Gonzalez belongs wherever they put Kelley, Paganelli, Mosley, and the bed lice.

KENTUCKY: Heavyweights, Louisville, Showtime Pay-Per-View.

Referee Dennis Alfred did what he could for fellow American Mike Tyson, deducting two points from Englishman Danny Williams in the third round that were occasioned by a mild hit after the break and what looked like an accidental low blow that missed Tyson's jewels. Warnings? We don't need no stinking warnings in Kentucky. Anyway, points were of no consequence, since aging, desperate, bankrupt Tyson had to be counted out in round four.

OREGON: Featherweights, Lincoln City, Showtime.

Referee Jeff Macaluso must have warned Juan Carlos Ramirez—no kidding—30 or 40 times about his low blows, headbutts, elbows, forearms, and other extracurricular tactics. By the time Macaluso took a point in the 11th round, the fight was already out of control and Jorge Martinez had a nasty cut over his left eye that Ramirez worked on with cruel intentions. Warnings to the non-English-speaking offender were, you guessed it, in English, unaccompanied by internationally recognized hand signals. Macaluso might as well have been speaking Eskimo. A truly abysmal performance.

Even *ShoBox's* Steve Farhood, normally a calm presence, ran out of patience. Had Fox Sports Net's screaming Max Kellerman been calling the fight, I fear he would have hurt himself.

NEVADA: (No list of Magoos can be complete without at least one Silver State atrocity.) Junior middleweights, Laughlin, Showtime.

Journeyman Grady Brewer got the best of up-and-coming cutie Sechew Powell, knocking him down hard in round five and pretty much dominating the next three rounds. None of this made any difference to judges Bill Graham and Robert Hoyle, who both scored it 76-74 for promoter DiBella's fighter, Powell. Paul Smith had it an acceptable 76-75 tally for Brewer. *ShoBox* watchdog Farhood saw it 77-74, Brewer. My own scorecard is missing. I prefer not to divulge details, but it's entirely possible I tore it up and ate it before my wife sedated me with the tranquilizer dart.

Promoters pay the officials' salary and expenses, so a promoter can be completely on the up and up and still get special breaks for his guys because officials think it might get them invited back to the party. A solution: Don't let promoters have any say in choosing officials. Penalize them where it counts—in their wallets—if they so much as suggest anyone for the roster. But this would only work if someone more competent than the promoter makes the choices, and in some locations that appears impossible.

Is there room for hope? In the last several years, Senator John McCain managed to get two boxing reform bills enacted, and both proved essentially toothless. But I still support his third bill, which crawls through Congress as we speak. It would establish a federally funded boxing administration within the Labor Department. The administrators would license fighters, promoters, managers, and alphabet gangs, and also standardize minimum safety rules. If we get the right people in the agency, maybe they can do something about some of these abominable acts.

On the other hand, we could wind up with the same sort of federal fools who proclaimed a year-and-a-half ago that our mission was accomplished in Iraq. But I still say it's worth a shot. Anything that at least gives us hope is better than what we've got now. As Shakespeare wrote, "The miserable have no other medicine, but only hope." Of course there's also the darker view taken by Friedrich Nietzsche: "In reality, hope is the worst of all evils, because it prolongs man's torments." Yeah, but so do bed lice. ■

CAMERA CLICKS

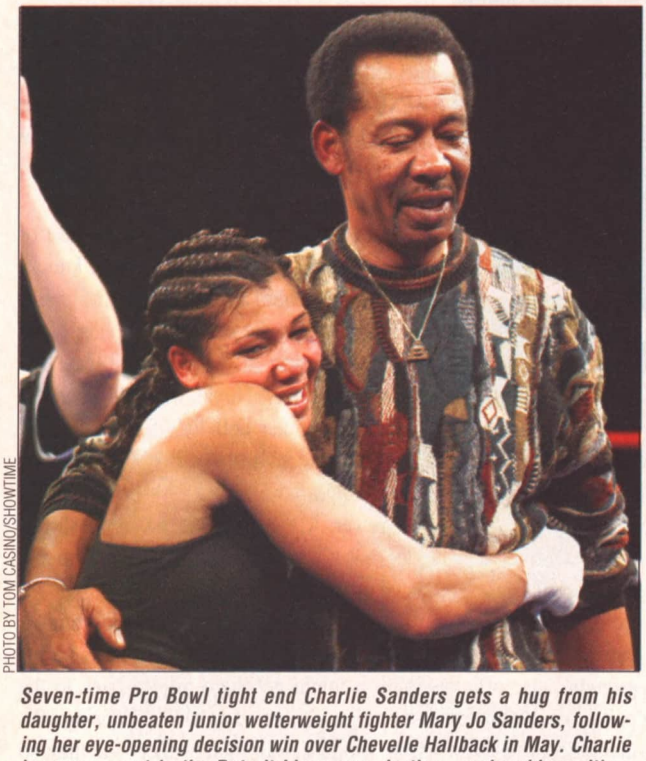


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Seven-time Pro Bowl tight end Charlie Sanders gets a hug from his daughter, unbeaten junior welterweight fighter Mary Jo Sanders, following her eye-opening decision win over Chevelle Hallback in May. Charlie is now a scout in the Detroit Lions organization—and we'd say it's a good thing he's a football scout and not a fashion scout after seeing that ghastly Cosby sweater he's sporting.

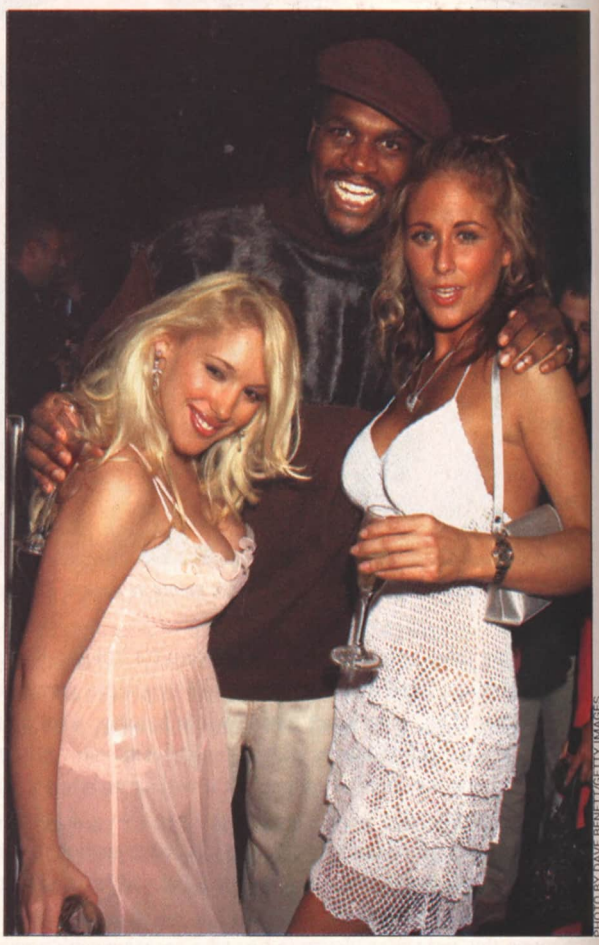


PHOTO BY DAVE BENETT/GETTY IMAGES

Who says Audley Harrison isn't making any progress? In this picture, he appears to be making plenty of progress. The British heavyweight was seen palling around with this pair of lovely ladies at the U.K. premiere of the film The Football Factory *at the Embassy Club in London.*

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

We could've sworn it was Jacqui Frazier-Lyde who called herself "Sister Smoke," but since Jacqui isn't doing much fighting anymore, maybe Laila Ali acquired the rights to the nickname. After her fourth-round kayo victory over Nikki Eplion in July, Ali rewarded herself with a cigar, as the show's promoter, Marty Wynn, and Ali's husband, Johnny McClain, looked on.

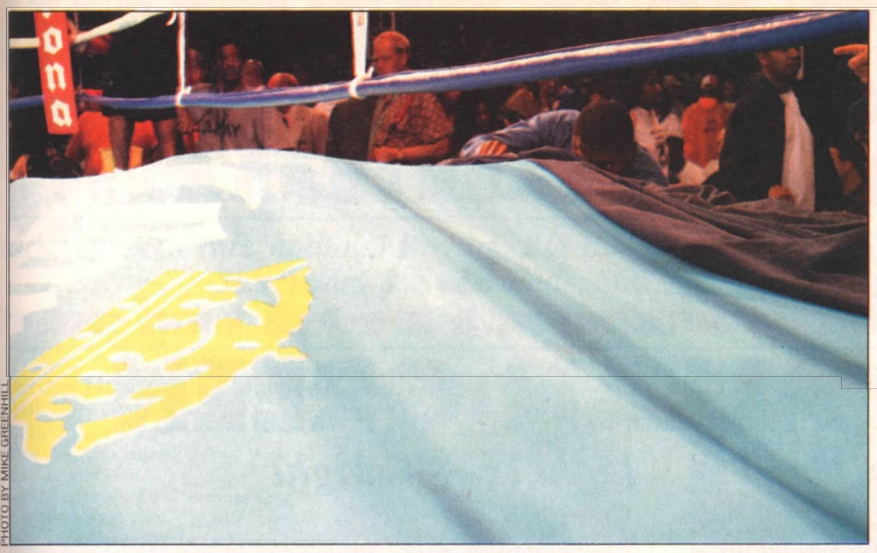


PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Talk about an uneven playing field: Judge Malik Waleed takes a look under the canvas as workers try to fix floorboards under the ring at the Ali-Eplion show in Bowie, Maryland. After seeing that abysmal pay-per-view, we can safely say it wouldn't have been a bad thing if the floorboards had been unfixable.

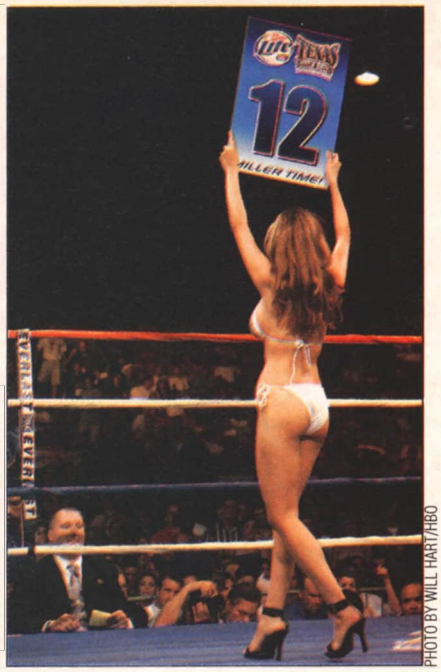


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Well, it's time for round 12, which means it's the end of the fight ... but to be perfectly honest, that's not the "end" that has our attention.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Arturo Gatti may have navigated his way around Leonard Dorin brilliantly when they fought in July, but he had a devil of a time navigating around this microphone after the fight. The microphone landed a pretty solid shot to Gatti's nose, but Gatti quickly fired back with a left hook to the lectern on which the microphone sat, and that was that.

NOSTALGIA CORNER

Danny "Little Red" Lopez was often the boss in the ring, but as we see here, he wasn't the boss at home; that distinction went to his wife, Bonnie. Lopez, who would eventually go on to reign for more than three years as WBC featherweight king, was a fresh-faced 19-year-old with a 12-0 (12) record at the time this picture was taken. We're not sure if it was the housework or the tough fights that led Lopez to burn out and retire from boxing at age 28.

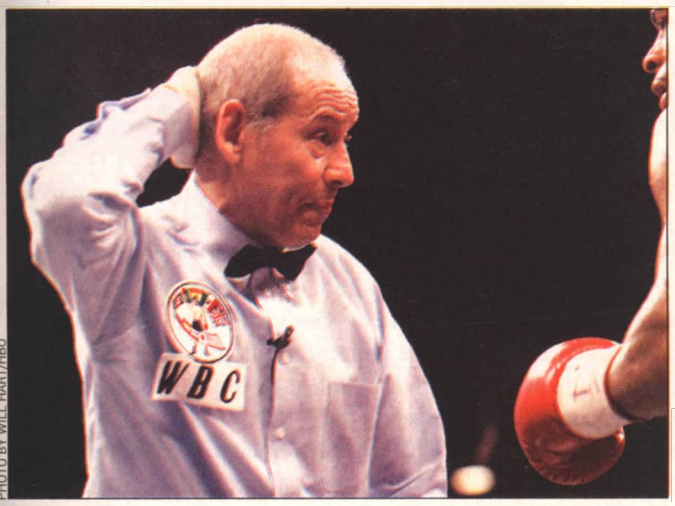


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

His officiating skills have been called into question recently, but Texas referee Robert Gonzalez does a mean "Macarena." Gonzalez likes to sing the song with his own lyrics, however: "Hey, Take-A-Point-A!"

NEW FACES

ALLAN GREEN

Light Heavyweight

By Joe Santoliquito

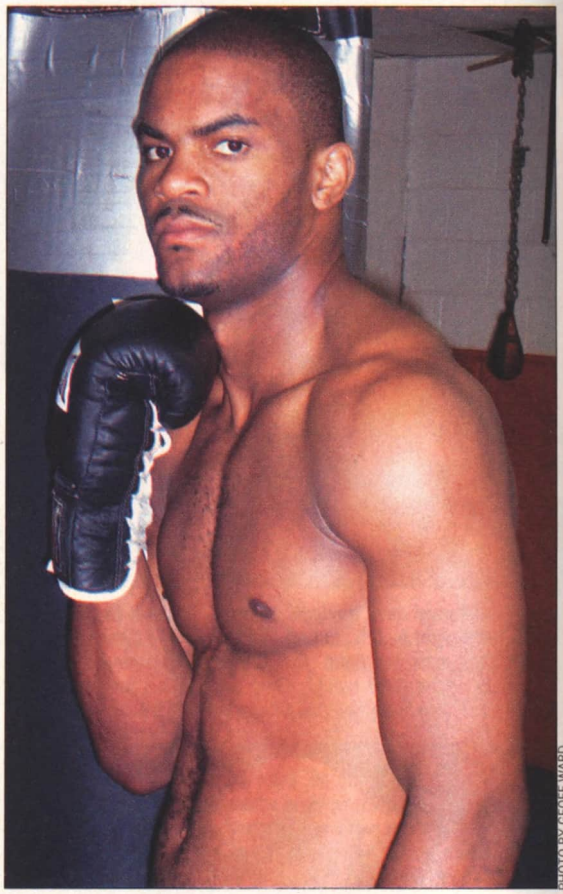


PHOTO BY GEOFF WARD

Each night was like a new mission involving the same theme: Where to sleep? It didn't matter to Allan Green if it was in an abandoned car or on a park bench. That's what life was like on the street for Green, when he was between the ages of 14 and 18, sleeping wherever he could, his gun tucked safely by his side.

Touring the underbelly of Tulsa, Oklahoma, on a daily basis was chaotic and understandably dangerous, especially for such a young kid. But Green kept his cool. He kept catching the bus to school each morning, and he never missed a day at the gym. *Never.*

Green shakes his head and laughs to himself now. Those were crazy, crazy times.

So, do you think Roy Jones, Antonio Tarver, or Glencoffe Johnson could offer anything that would throw a twinge of fright into Green? Not likely.

Green, a 24-year-old light heavyweight, is looking to make a big splash in 2005. He's already 13-0 (9), with 12 fights over the last two years. He's survived the streets unscathed, and no longer needs a gun to feel safe. He has two very capable hands, which Conal MacPhee had the unfortunate task of finding out about when Green crushed him in two rounds with an uppercut.

Green's victory over MacPhee came in early-July in San Diego, California, and boosted Green's career immensely, since the fight received national exposure on ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights*.

"Call me insane, but I just love fighting," Green said. "I didn't lose focus when I was on the street. Got challenged a lot, and I had some protection with me. But I was a natural fighter. I still used to get into an occasional street scuffle."

Green was fortunate, because those street scuffles were not exactly garden-variety brawls. One time, when Green was 14 and still living with his mother, he knocked out some

(Continued on page 87)

PRO RECORD

2002		
Nov. 9	Mike Dykes, Oklahoma City, OK	KO 1
2003		
Jan. 3	Donnie Davis, Norman, OK	KO 1
Feb. 7	Rodney Moore, Las Vegas	KO 1
March 8	Ola Afolabi, Tustin, CA	W 4
April 25	Berry Basler, Norman	KO 3
July 25	Tyrone Jackson, Tulsa, OK	W 6
Sept. 5	James Green, Las Vegas	KO 5
Nov. 7	Marc LeFleche, Tucson, AZ	KO 5
2004		
Jan. 31	John Turlington, Tulsa	W 4
Feb. 6	Joe Pastorello, Tucson	KO 2
March 5	Laverne Clark, Pala, CA	KO 3
March 27	Willard Lewis, Tustin	W 8
July 2	Conal MacPhee, San Diego	KO 2

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
13	13	0	0	9

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Feb. 1982: The Only Man Sugar Ray Leonard Is Afraid To Fight. Also: Escalera, Benitez-Duran, Robinson-LaMotta, Sims.

June 1982: Wilfred Benitz Eyes His Fourth World Title: Can He Beat Marvin Hagler? Also: Weaver, Buchanan, M. Spinks, Leonard.

Aug. 1982: Michael Spinks & Howard Davis Jr.: Different Destinies On The Road From Montreal. Also: Richard Sandoval, Big John Tate, Jimmy Bradock, 1956 in review.

Feb. 1983: Howard Davis Jr.: "Why I'll Win The Lightweight Title This Time!" Also: Snipes, Fletcher-Green, Mustafa Muhammad, Tubbs.

April 1983: "The Pain From The Tragedy Has Passed," By Ray Mancini. Also: Broad, Hearns-Benitez, 1982 in review.

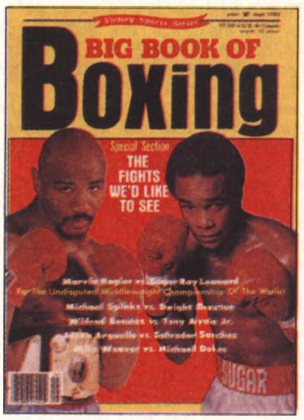
Aug. 1983: Hector "Macho" Camacho: Even The Best Of Two Divisions Can't Halt His Charge To The Top. Also: Pryor-Arguello II preview, Rossman, Randolph, Collins.

BIG BOOK OF BOXING

Sept. 1982: The Fights We'd Like To See—Leonard-Hagler, Spinks-Braxton, Benitez-Ayala Jr., Arguello-Sanchez, Weaver-Dokes. Also: Liston-Foreman dream fight.

July 1983: Michael Dokes: How He Can Restore The Decayed WBA Title. Also: Torres, Burns, young heavyweights, Patterson-Johansson, Pryor-Armstrong dream fight.

March 1984: Suppose Sugar Ray Leonard Never Retired, Part I. Also:



Tunney, lightweights, Pep-Pedroza dream fight.

Sept. 1984: Gerry Cooney's Comeback: The 12 Herculean Tasks He Must Complete. Also: Jack Sharkey, Holmes-Foreman dream fight, Jack Johnson, That Wonderful Year: 1958.

July 1985: Championship Corner: Donald Curry vs. Colin Jones. Also: Napoles-Griffith, Ali, Charles, 10 meanest fighters, Spinks-Galindez dream fight.

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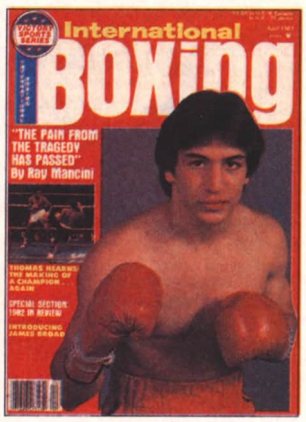
Spring 1988: A Legend In The Making—Mike Tyson: A Collection Of His Greatest



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DANNY WILLIAMS ISN'T CRYING ANYMORE

How He Overcame His Fears To Kayo Mike Tyson

By Brian Doogan

A heavybag swung violently in the sweltering downtown gym in Phoenix. A pool of sweat collected on the floor. Mike Tyson ripped in punches, high and low, a ferocious accumulation, a frightening outpouring of pent-up hate.

An ocean and seven time zones away, Nubiah Williams tossed and turned in her bed. "I want my daddy," she cried, and soon she was in the arms of her father, Danny, who had run up the stairs of their terraced house in Peckham, south London, to awaken his five-year-old daughter from her nightmare.

"When I told her that I would be going to America and she wouldn't see me for several weeks, she was very sad. She went to bed, but she had this nightmare," Williams revealed. "I said that I'm fighting Mike Tyson, but she didn't know Mike Tyson. All she knew was she wasn't going to be with her daddy, and that made her very upset."

On the night of July 30 in Freedom Hall, Louisville, where Muhammad Ali had his first professional fight against a cop called Tunney Hunsaker, Williams was reunited with Nubiah, wife Zoe, and 10-week-old baby Maliah. Most observers expected the 31-year-old ex-British and Commonwealth heavyweight champion to be trapped in his own nightmare, induced by the concussive, destructive punching power of the returning former world heavyweight champion. But there he sat with Maliah on his knee, feeding his little baby. Nubiah hugged her dad. Zoe smiled with burning pride. Instead of folding, instead of falling apart in the neurotic way that had dogged so much of his career, he had walked through thunder and lightning in Louisville to win the fight of his life. Tyson lay at his feet, a fourth-round knockout victim. Williams the Conqueror had occasioned one of those memorable heavyweight nights.

"I never thought I'd see Mike Tyson lose here. Who is this Danny Williams?" asked a middle-aged man in a white suit, white shoes, and white fedora, dressed more appropriately for race day at Churchill Downs than a night at the fights. His name was Rahaman Ali. Over the years, his brother—"The Louisville Lip"—produced some of the greatest boxing nights of all.

"I'd never seen Williams fight before. I didn't know who he was," admitted Evander Holyfield, another of the great heavyweights who was ringside. "But it always comes down to whether or not a man can fight, and he showed tonight that he certainly can. I know him now, for sure."

Williams could not have announced himself on a grander stage. In slaying the fighter who was once Mike Tyson, the baddest and most feared man on the planet, in four fiercely fought rounds, he opened a door into heavyweight boxing's great room. Significantly, too, he slammed the last one shut on a man who was once the sport's undisputed king, who now faces an uncertain future, weighed down by nearly $40-million of debt. Of course, he had overcome a mere remnant of heavyweight destruction, a masquerading Iron Mike. But even in decline, Tyson remains the most resonant of names. To have brought about the demise of the old ogre of the prize ring gives Williams considerable cache.

"This could definitely be the end, no doubt about it," said Tyson's trainer, Freddie Roach, sadly. "Part of me wants to say already that it is."

PHOTOS BY MATTHEW STOCKMAN/GETTY IMAGES

Once he'd survived Tyson's early rush, Williams dug in and fired back with both hands. Tyson used upper-body movement to avoid punches in the early going (above left), but soon slowed down and began to get tagged on a regular basis by the 265-pound Williams.

Only Tyson's quick departure to the Audubon Hospital, to undergo a brain scan and have his twisted left knee examined while also getting a cut by the side of his right eye stitched up, prevented Roach from acknowledging the inevitable.

"We'll chat about it when we get back to Phoenix," Roach added. "I'd hate to see Mike get hurt, because I care a lot about him. He's 38. He fought very hard; he was game, but he took a lot of shots. The financial side is not an issue at all. What good's all the money in the world if you can't count it?"

That Williams, a physical talent who has cracked up at the prospect of facing far less threatening fighters than Tyson, delivered the coup de grace on Tyson's career was the great shock. So much in his career suggested that Williams would be consumed by stage fright. Instead, he stayed on his feet despite being rocked by murderous blows from Tyson in the opening round. And his heart stayed strong even when the referee, Dennis Alfred, ludicrously intervened in round three to deduct two points off the Londoner's total, the first for hitting on the break, the second for a questionable low blow. Then Williams seized his opportunity when it came in the fourth, hammering Tyson with a two-fisted assault of almost 20 punches, interrupted by a Tyson swing with his right hand that missed before five more destructive blows sent Tyson sliding against the ropes and to the floor. He was only partway up when Alfred counted him out at 2:51.

"I saw a man who's a shell of his former self when I looked at Mike Tyson and anticipated the fight," revealed Williams, 32-3 (27). "He's still a tremendous puncher and still a danger to a lot of heavyweights, but he's just 40 percent of the fighter he used to be. I remember watching him when I was about 12, 13. I was amazed. I thought this guy was unbelievable. I didn't think anyone could beat him. But every fighter reaches his end. I knew I was going to beat him. I was convinced."

But not everyone was; in fact, hardly anyone was. As Williams acknowledged, Tyson would have taken one look at his record and seen that he lost to Julius Francis, whom Tyson decimated in two rounds in January 2000 at Manchester's MEN Arena. But this was a fight not about Tyson, it was about Williams and how he would control his anxieties. How would a fighter who admitted to bursting into tears at the wheel of his car as he contemplated fighting Michael Sprott for the British belt deal with the reality of Tyson rushing him from the other corner? If Sprott could cause him mental meltdown, Tyson would surely instill dark, demoralizing thoughts.

His neurosis, Williams insisted, had always been self-induced, a symptom of the pressure he put himself under when fighting men he should beat with one arm tied behind his back, a feat he essentially achieved when stopping Mark Potter in six rounds in October 2000 with a succession of lefts after dislocating his right shoulder.

"That fight showed I have heart. Most fighters would have quit as soon as the

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PHOTO BY MATTHEW STOCKMAN/GETTY IMAGES

Who needs Lennox Lewis? Englishman Williams proudly touts his heritage moments after knocking out Tyson in Louisville, Kentucky. Whether or not he can duplicate the now-retired Lewis' feat of winning the heavyweight championship remains to be seen.

shoulder went out, but I didn't even give it a thought. I just punched away with my good arm, my right arm dangling by my side, until he dropped," Williams recalled with pride. "But in too many fights, I've put myself under too much stress, too much pressure. Many times I've just burst out crying in the week before a bout. And it's been a fight I should win easily. The second Sprott fight was the last time. I was just driving around Streatham, near my home in London, my head pounding, and I lost it, all because I just want to live up to everybody's expectations. That's what happened, too, when I first fought Julius. (Williams stopped Francis in four rounds in a rematch.)

"But it was never the case against Tyson. I was in a fight where everyone expected him to knock me out. All of the pressure was off me. I didn't feel it at all, I really didn't."

Williams was 12 when he first witnessed what Tyson's fists could do. The second-round victim was Trevor Berbick, who then held the WBC belt. Williams' father had pushed him into boxing after dreaming that his son, initially reluctant to embrace the idea himself, would one day become world heavyweight champion. But Williams thought that the fighter on the TV was invincible, that he could never be beaten.

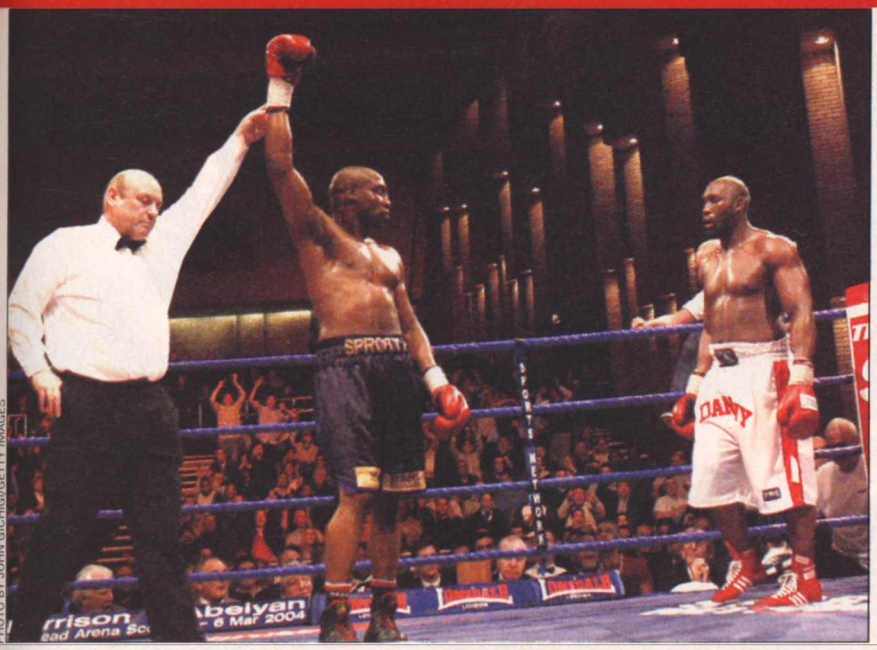

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Prior to the Tyson fight, Williams had been criticized in England for his inconsistent performances. Even though he'd beaten Michael Sprott in their first meeting, William had a mental meltdown prior to the rematch, which resulted in a decision victory for Sprott (pictured).

"I was in awe of him then," Williams admitted. "But that was 20 years ago. What he's been feeding off for years is his reputation. We remember the Tyson of the 1980s, but all that remains is his punch. All the bad living, the smoking, the drinking, the ballooning weight, it's taken a toll. He works on intimidation now. There was a time when he didn't need to, when he just did it in the ring. Now he acts like a thug, like a little street gangster. He wants people to fear him. But to me, he was my opportunity to break into the elite of heavyweight boxing."

His confidence was grounded in his earnest preparation under trainer Jim McDonnell. The one-time conqueror of Barry McGuigan and heroic loser against Azumah Nelson had Williams pushing a Volvo up a hill most days to build

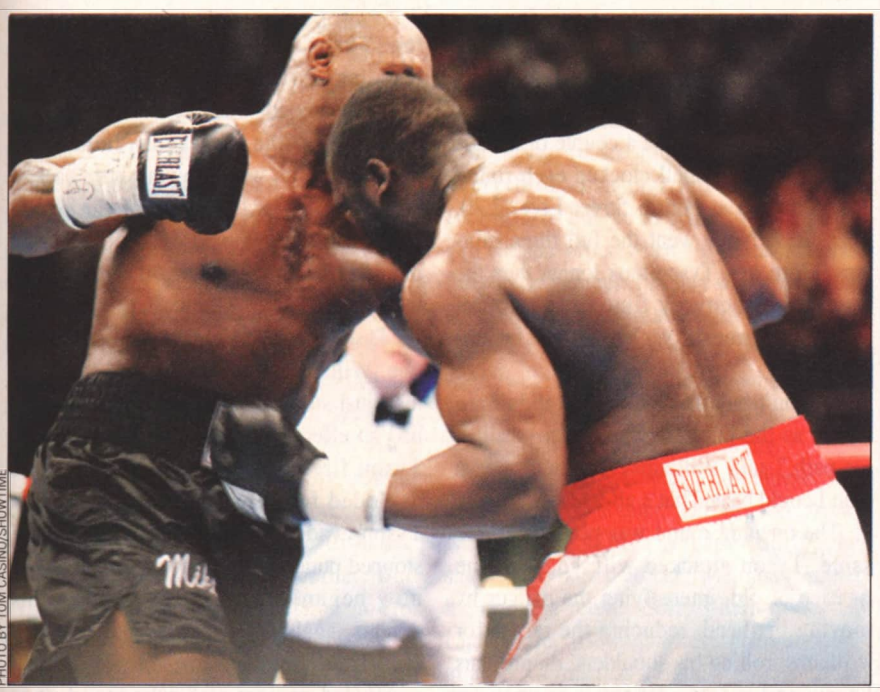

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Tyson and Williams engage each other in one of the fight's many heated exchanges. Although many fans expected a quick Tyson blowout, they instead got arguably the most exciting heavyweight fight of 2004, featuring plenty of drama.

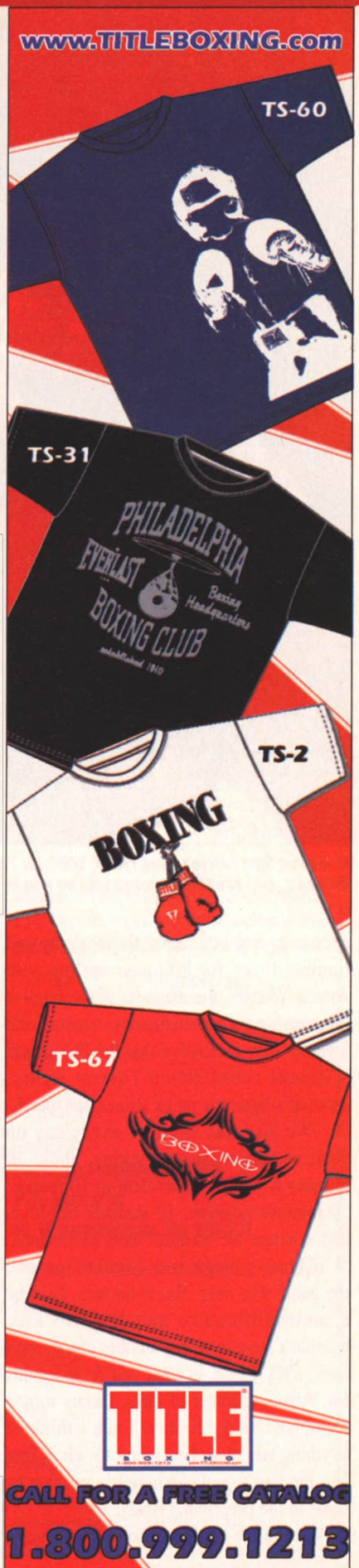

PHOTO BY PAUL GILHAM/GETTY IMAGES

In his last fight before facing Tyson, Williams TKO'd the Ivory Coast's Augustine N'Gou in London on May 13, 2004. N'Gou, pictured fielding a left from Williams, quit after three rounds with an arm injury. But the British media was not impressed due to N'Gou's lack of world-class credentials.

endurance and extra strength. He compared running times for 80-meter sprints with Arsene Wenger, the manager of the English Premiership soccer champions, Arsenal, and together they concluded that the 265-pound Williams could match Thierry Henry, Arsenal's lightning quick striker, for speed.

"We also had sessions every day on positive and negative thinking, about 30 minutes a session, equivalent to 10 rounds, 20 minutes positive, 10 minutes negative, that's where we started," said McDonnell. "I told him if he got beat, knocked out, cut, the game was over. But if he won, he'd be a multimillionaire and his two kids wouldn't have to worry another day in their lives. This, I said, is what you're doing this for. After a number of days, Danny turned to me and said, 'Jimmy, I can't think of anything negative. I'm going to win.' This was the first time I can honestly say that he came to the ring totally ready."

They were further encouraged when a public workout just off Muhammad Ali Boulevard pointed to Tyson's fatal flaw: endurance. Tyson has not been able to sustain his ferocity beyond a couple of rounds for years. McDonnell clocked each round Tyson trained at Fourth Street Live: 2:20, 2:33, 2:12. None went the full three minutes. Moreover, Tyson took longer than the regulation recovery time, one minute, between the rounds, yet he was still breathing heavily.

"I didn't buy into the myth. I didn't see Tyson as the monster who destroys all in his path," said Williams. "I saw him as a man I could beat. That's all I saw."

The opening round was perilous all the same. Tyson attacked with some of the menace of old, intensifying the danger by moving his head, reducing the target for Williams, rolling his shoulders, dipping his knees, and gaining leverage to open up angles. A solid right hand to the body and a wicked left uppercut trapped Williams in the Tyson corner. Tyson ripped in bodyshots that clearly hurt. A left hook to the jaw stunned Williams and a follow-up uppercut left the bigger man holding on. Worryingly, he was throwing little back of note. But toward the end of the round, Tyson grimaced in pain. His left knee gave out after he loaded up another hook. The injury would require surgery.

Tyson remained the aggressor in round two. Williams, however, began to do more than just suffer. He landed a left hook that had an effect on Tyson and flurried before Tyson fired right back. Williams' fists exploded into a wild, sustained assault. Tyson evaded the blows well, but he had stopped punching. The doubts in his nature now began to surface. In each of his defeats, against Buster Douglas, Evander Holyfield, and Lennox Lewis, he had unraveled against men who stood up to him. Williams was another to be counted. The referee spuriously deducted two points

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Williams celebrates his victory over Tyson with trainer Jimmy McDonnell (far left) and assistant trainer Dwight Yarde. McDonnell figured that Tyson would run out of gas after seeing his sparring rounds cut short during a public prefight workout in Louisville.

from him in the third, but the war was being won.

Williams used his 32-pound weight advantage to lean down on Tyson, who got cut by his right eye. Increasingly disheveled, Tyson was rocked by a right before he landed his own right after the bell. Williams, he now knew, was not going easily, if at all.

Tyson came out furiously in the fourth, but Williams repelled him almost disdainfully, landing strong, short shots inside. One of these hurt Tyson decisively. He retreated into his shell, and Williams exploded. Alternating with both fists, Williams shook Tyson with a succession of unanswered punches. Tyson was a lame duck. Unable to push Williams back, he entered the final phase for a beaten fighter: acceptance. He lashed out wildly with a right, but missed before Williams ended the fight with five punches, right-left-right-left-right, the final thumping right sending Tyson to the floor via the ropes.

Tyson could have beaten the count. Referee Alfred gave him 15 seconds, having interrupted his toll at five to usher Williams back into a neutral corner. But Tyson made a conscious decision not to rise before he knew it would be too late.

Behind the scenes, in an office being used by the fight broadcasters, Showtime, another drama was unfolding. Andy Ayling, representing Williams' manager, Frank Warren, was counting cash, almost $80,000 in notes. The local promoter, Chris Webb, had failed to pay Williams' $250,000 purse (reported in much of the U.S. media as $350,000). Half an hour before the fight began, Webb produced the ticket takings for the night and gave it to Ayling, who was counting it throughout the fight, right up until Tyson was counted out.

"But this was never about the money," declared Williams. "This was about beating Tyson and proving who Danny Williams was. I didn't know that Zoe had arrived from London with my two kids. That was everything, to see them at that moment, everything. I'm married to Zoe under Islamic law, but we're going to get married in a registry office when we get back, hopefully in September. I'm just so thankful that at last I was able to show the real Danny Williams, a genuine contender for the world heavyweight title. Vitali Klitschko, Chris Byrd, John Ruiz, Lamon Brewster, I now want to fight one of the beltholders."

Tyson, 50-5 (44) with 2 no-contests, left the ring a broken man, with his son, Amir, walking behind him in tears. "Sorry," he said to his trainer, Roach, when he reached the dressing room. "Sorry I didn't do what I had to do." He might have been thinking of a life, as much as a fight. ■

Brian Doogan, THE RING's European correspondent, was ringside in Louisville, Kentucky, for the Williams-Tyson fight.

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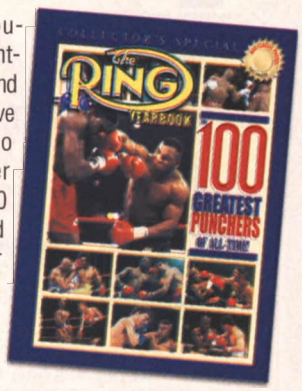

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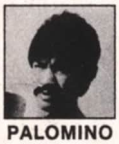

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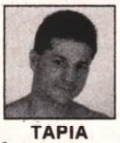

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The RING 100

RANKING THE BEST FIGHTERS IN THE WORLD

In a world where one punch can change everything, Antonio Tarver's single-shot knockout of Roy Jones typified the sort of results that have led to a sweeping shakeup in this year's pound-for-pound rating of the top 100 boxers in the world. But while Jones' nosedive and Tarver's ascension represent two of the most surprising changes that have occurred during the past 12 months, the overall landscape has also altered significantly as what HBO's Larry Merchant has christened the "theater of the unexpected" unfolded on boxing's roped stage.

There are 29 fighters in this year's RING 100 who weren't included last year, and of the 71 holdovers, only four finished in the same spot as they did on 2003. Some of the most famous names no longer on the list—Lennox Lewis, Sven Ottke, Paulie Ayala—have hung up their gloves. Others have departed due to losses and/or inactivity.

The biggest bump among repeaters went to welterweight champion Cory Spinks, who jumped 47 places, going from 64th to 17th. Conversely, previously undefeated Leonard Dorin took the longest tumble, thanks to his knockout loss to Arturo Gatti, falling from 42nd to 88th place. Virtually all of the newcomers have earned their rating by scoring big wins, often over fighters who have either dropped down or been removed from the roll.

As opinion and subjective judgment play major roles, putting together pound-for-pound ratings is far from an exact science. As always, the editors have attempted to answer such esoteric questions as who would win a match between Manny Pacquiao and, say, Winky Wright, if they were both the same size. And while this sort of abstract thinking always factors into compiling a P-4-P list, what each boxer has accomplished in actual fights against men his own size also goes a long way toward deciding the final standing.

Readers will discover that some fighters are rated higher here than fighters who rank above them in their own divisions. For example, a quick look at THE RING's junior welterweight rankings on page 16 will reveal that Floyd Mayweather is rated number five, while he holds down the number-two position in this year's RING 100. That's because results against other fighters in the same division is by far the most important factor in our monthly ratings, while pound-for-pound rankings involves far more speculation and gives greater weight to potential and prior accomplishments in weight classes other than the one where the fighter is currently competing.

As is always the case, there is bound to be plenty of disagreement about the final standings. But even those who favor Mayweather over Bernard Hopkins for the top spot—a hot topic of debate among fans and insiders alike as of our August 11 press deadline—will agree that this year's RING 100 represents an excellent overview of the very finest fighters the Sweet Science has to offer.

The RING 100

1 BERNARD HOPKINS
World Middleweight Champion 44-2-1 (31) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 2
Status Report: When last year's number one, Roy Jones, was iced by Antonio Tarver, some felt Floyd Mayweather should take over the top spot. But the middleweight champ's lengthy reign (which includes a division-record 18 successful title defenses), his two wins since this time last year (W 12 William Joppy, W 12 Robert Allen), and his consummate craftsmanship were more than enough to warrant the ultimate position.
Future: Everything—the undisputed 160-pound title, his pound-for-pound ranking, his future as a pay-per-view fighter, his legacy—will be on the line September 18 against Oscar De La Hoya.

Hopkins dominates Allen once again

2 FLOYD MAYWEATHER
Junior Welterweight 32-0 (21)

Last Year's Ranking: 7
Status Report: Relinquished the lightweight championship after a third and final defense (KO 7 Philip Ndou), and performed well in his first outing at 140 pounds (W 12 DeMarcus Corley). Fought in a more aggressive and entertaining manner in those two bouts than in some previous fights, and barely lost a round.
Future: Has the speed, boxing skills, and confidence to beat anyone his size, but might be pushing the limits of his slender body too far if he persists in gunning for Oscar De La Hoya, who is now fighting at middleweight.

3 ANTONIO TARVER
World Light Heavyweight Champion 22-2 (18)

Last Year's Ranking: 27
Status Report: Two bouts with former pound-for-pound king Roy Jones (L 12, KO 2) have radically enhanced his standing. The one-punch kayo of Jones made him a legitimate star.
Future: Nothing set as of press time, but expedition into the heavyweight ranks is likely. Outside of a rubber match with Jones or perhaps a fight with Bernard Hopkins, there are no monster paydays available at 175 pounds.

Tarver keeps Jones at bay with a jab

4 ROY JONES
Light Heavyweight 49-2 (38)

Last Year's Ranking: 1
Status Report: Doubts about his supremacy began with controversial decision over Antonio Tarver last November, and then came the crushing kayo defeat in the rematch, which tumbled him from the top perch. Wouldn't have still been so highly ranked based purely on what's happened since last RING 100, but past accomplishments keep him among elite.
Future: Scheduled to challenge IBF titleholder Glencoffe Johnson on September 25. Most fans hope a rubber match with Tarver will follow.

5 WINKY WRIGHT
World Junior Middleweight Champion 47-3 (25)

Last Year's Ranking: 20
Status Report: Finally got the big fight he'd been begging for, and capitalized by comprehensively outpointing Shane Mosley to win the world 154-pound title. Near-flawless victory showcased 32-year-old southpaw's previously underappreciated talent.
Future: Mosley wants to exercise the return-bout clause that was part of their contract for the first fight, so they'll do it again on November 20 in Las Vegas.

6 ERIK MORALES
WBC/IBF Super Featherweight Titleholder 47-1 (34)

Last Year's Ranking: 6
Status Report: Won a pair of 130-pound alphabet belts with 12-round unanimous decisions over Jesus Chavez (WBC) and Carlos Hernandez (IBF), as well a rematch against Guty Espadas (KO 3) since last year's ratings. Still virtually incapable of being in a bad fight.
Future: A wide variety of excellent matches are available, including a super showdown with Manny Pacquiao and a rubber match with Marco Antonio Barrera. Is expected to fight again in November.

7 MANNY PACQUIAO
World Featherweight Champion 38-2-2 (29)

Last Year's Ranking: 32
Status Report: Dismissed previously unbeaten Emmanuel Lucero (KO 3), brutalized Marco Antonio Barrera (KO 11) to capture world 126-pound title, and engaged in thrilling brawl with classy Juan Manuel Marquez (D 12) since last year's rankings to cement his rep as one of today's best and most exciting fighters.
Future: Nothing set as of early-August, but couldn't go wrong fighting rematches with Barrera and/or Marquez. Filipino newspapers have reported that Barrera is likely to come first.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Pacquiao tears into Marquez with a right

8 JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
WBA/IBF Featherweight Titleholder 42-2-1 (33)

Last Year's Ranking: 13
Status Report: Had the best 12 months of his career since last RING 100, dominating Marcos Licona (KO 9), adding WBA belt to his collection with win over Derrick Gainer (Tech. Win 7), and then rallying from three first-round knockdowns to hold world 126-pound champion Pacquiao to a draw in Fight of the Year candidate. One of the most technically superb fighters in the game.
Future: An alphabet defense against Orlando Salido on the Bernard Hopkins-Oscar De La Hoya undercard is planned. After that, maybe a rematch with Pacquiao.

9 OSCAR DE LA HOYA
Middleweight 37-3 (29)

Last Year's Ranking: 4
Status Report: A points loss to Shane Mosley for junior middleweight title and a controversial decision over Felix Sturm in 160-pound debut combined to lower "The Golden Boy's" pound-for-pound standing, but a win over Bernard Hopkins would send it skyrocketing again.
Future: Probable retirement if "The Executioner" beats him badly, but a victory or a close loss could keep him in the game a while longer.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

De La Hoya attacks in Mosley rematch

10 KOSTYA TSZYU
World Junior Welterweight Champion 30-1 (24) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 5
Status Report: Injuries have kept him on the shelf since January 2003 and lowered his P-4-P ranking. At 35, it's difficult to know if he can regain his previous form.
Future: Long-awaited, twice-postponed rematch with Sharmba Mitchell tentatively set for November 6, probably in America, not Australia. If successful, a move up to welterweight to challenge world champ Cory Spinks may follow.

11 JAMES TONEY
Heavyweight 67-4-2 (43)

Last Year's Ranking: 21
Status Report: Gladly packed on a few pounds and turned in a surprisingly dominant performance against Evander Holyfield (KO 9) that earned him a top-five heavyweight ranking and secured 2003 Fighter of the Year honors. Was supposed to face physically imposing Jameel McCline in February, but tore Achilles' tendon in training and has been on the shelf since.
Future: Scheduled for easy comeback fight against untested Rydell Booker in September. After that, light heavy champ Antonio Tarver or minor heavyweight beltholder Lamon Brewster may be on the radar.

12 JOSE LUIS CASTILLO
World Lightweight Champion 50-6-1 (45)

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Last Year's Ranking: 17
Status Report: Fight with Juan Lazcano (W 12) confirmed what we suspected: Floyd Mayweather was the only lightweight better over the last couple of years. Prior to claiming vacant championship with brutal pounding of Lazcano, Mexican kept busy with wins over Saul Duran (KO 8) and Derrick Parks (KO 2).
Future: Nothing scheduled as of press time, but Top Rank stablemate Julio Diaz has been mentioned, and Diego Corrales would be a fight fan's dream.

Castillo outfights Lazcano for lightweight title

13 RAFAEL MARQUEZ
IBF Bantamweight Titleholder 32-3 (29)

Last Year's Ranking: 14
Status Report: Devastating puncher showed versatility this year, outboxing veteran Mauricio Pastrana (W 12), aggressively destroying overmatched Pete Frissina (KO 2), and obliterating respected Heriberto Ruiz (KO 3) with a single, sensational uppercut. By making first three defenses of alphabet title, solidified reputation as the world's leading 118-pounder.
Future: Unification with Veerapol Sahaprom or Johnny Bredahl unlikely, but a defense against Genaro Garcia—the last man to beat him—would be interesting. Also considering a move up to junior feather.

14 VEERAPOL SAHAPROM
WBC Bantamweight Titleholder 44-1-2 (31)

Last Year's Ranking: 15
Status Report: Scraped by on another draw against Toshiaki Nishioka last October (they'd previously drawn in 2001), then finally put the issue to rest with a lopsided decision win over Nishioka in March. Second-longest reigning titlist in boxing has been busy since, topping journeyman Julio Cesar Avila (KO 12) in May and anonymous Rajabu Mahoja (KO 5) in June.
Future: Should have prevailed in September defense against decent Ricardo Vargas by the time you read this, unless 35-year-old beltholder finally starts showing his age.

15 MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA
Featherweight 58-4 (41)

Last Year's Ranking: 3
Status Report: Took a major tumble when Manny Pacquiao handed him his first definitive loss in seven years, a dominating 11th-round kayo defeat in which Mexican living legend seemed to grow old overnight. Looked like his old self again, though, in comeback fight against Paulie Ayala (KO 10).
Future: We could find out if the Pacquiao fight was just an off-night, if rumored rematch comes together. If it doesn't, probably a move up to 130 pounds.

Barrera blasts Ayala with a right

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

16 DIEGO CORRALES
Lightweight 39-2 (32)

Last Year's Ranking: 51
Status Report: "Chico" has had an eventful year in the ring, to say the least. Lost a thriller to Joel Casamayor (KO by 6) last October, toughed out an impressive win in the rematch (W 12), then handed Acelino Freitas his first defeat (KO 10). Gutsy boxer-puncher in the running for 2004 Fighter of the Year honors.
Future: Says he wants to clean out the 135-pound division. Needs to go through world champ Jose Luis Castillo to achieve that.

Corrales catches Casamayor en route to winning rematch

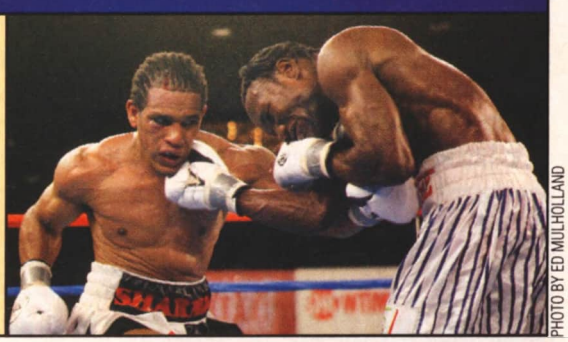
PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

17 CORY SPINKS
World Welterweight Champion 33-2 (11)

Last Year's Ranking: 64
Status Report: Southpaw spoiler got the better of two elite foes in the past 12 months—at least on the judges' scorecards—to bolt up the P-4-P ladder. Decisioned Ricardo Mayorga in a fight in which little happened (joining dad Leon and uncle Michael as an undisputed champion), then survived some late drama to narrowly outpoint Zab Judah in his first defense.
Future: Shouldn't need any help from the judges to beat used-up Miguel Angel Gonzalez in September.

18 SHARMBA MITCHELL
Junior Welterweight 55-3 (31)

Last Year's Ranking: 16
Status Report: The number-one contender at 140 pounds has stayed focused and adequately active in the face of continued postponement of his rematch with Kostya Tszyu. Narrowly turned away tough Lovemore Ndou (W 12), whipped game but limited Mike Stewart (W 12), and blew out no-hoper Moises Pedroza (KO 2).
Future: For now, rematch with world champ Tszyu is on for November 6. Though the delays have been frustrating, "The Little Big Man" has to love the fact that Tszyu will have been inactive for 22 months by then.



Mitchell gets by tough Ndou

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

19 RICARDO MAYORGA
Middleweight 26-4-1 (22) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 8
Status Report: Stock dropped gradually as "El Matador" made insensitive comments about Cory Spinks' mother, performed poorly in losing welterweight title to Spinks (L 12), failed to make weight for comeback fight, and then struggled with Eric Mitchell (W 10). Still a popular character, but Mayorga-mania has definitely cooled off since last year.
Future: Despite recent struggles, got the call as Felix Trinidad's comeback opponent for big bucks on October 2 at Madison Square Garden.

20 VERNON FORREST
Welterweight 35-2 (26) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 9
Status Report: Lanky ex-champ performed respectably in losing debatable decision in rematch with Ricardo Mayorga last July, but took a long break afterward—and had the break extended by shoulder and elbow surgery in the spring. The competitive loss to Mayorga didn't affect his P-4-P status much; the full year of inactivity has.
Future: Moving up to junior middleweight whenever he's healthy. Fight with world champ Winky Wright would be an intriguing matchup, if not an exciting one.

21 SHANE MOSLEY
Junior Middleweight 39-3 (35) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 10
Status Report: Easily outboxed by Winky Wright (L 12) for the world junior middleweight championship and suffered his third loss in his last five fights. Prior to that, scored a controversial decision in rematch with Oscar De La Hoya to claim 154-pound title.
Future: Will get a rematch with Wright in November—facing most likely the same result as the first fight. One difference: Joe Goossen will be his new trainer, replacing Sugar Shane's father, Jack.

22 ARTURO GATTI
WBC Super Lightweight Titleholder 38-6 (29)

Last Year's Ranking: 33
Status Report: Continued resurgence by scoring arguably the most impressive victory of his career, a one-punch, second-round knockout of Leo Dorin in July. In previous fight, six months earlier, claimed devalued alphabet belt against little-known Gianluca Branco (W 12).
Future: He wants to challenge himself against Floyd Mayweather, but what the fighter wants and what his management team desires could be two different things. More likely possibilities are Paul Spadafora or James Leija in November or December.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

Gatti has Dorin on the defensive

23 JOEL CASAMAYOR
Junior Lightweight 31-2 (19)

Last Year's Ranking: 22
Status Report: A lot has happened for the veteran Cuban boxer-puncher since last year's rankings, but his position almost remains the same. He split two inconclusive fights with Diego Corrales (KO 6, L 12), then defeated Daniel Seda (W 10). He also switched trainers, replacing Joe Goossen with Buddy McGirt.
Future: Top Rank has dropped its first hints that a showdown with Erik Morales, which would be for the vacant RING junior lightweight title, is being explored. A move up to lightweight for another crack at Corrales would also provide a good payday.

24 ROSENDO ALVAREZ
World Junior Flyweight Champion 32-2-2 (21)

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Last Year's Ranking: 23
Status Report: Maintained roughly the same ranking he had last year by surviving an action-packed battle with Victor Burgos (D 12) to retain the world junior flyweight title. Showed excellent endurance despite fighting for the first time in nine months, winning the championship rounds to pull out the draw.
Future: With just three fights to his name in the last 2½ years, needs to get busy before it's too late. Rematch with Burgos or fourth fight with Beibis Mendoza possible.

Alvarez slams home an uppercut against Burgos

25 ACELINO FREITAS
Lightweight 35-1 (31)

Last Year's Ranking: 12
Status Report: Talented but overprotected Brazilian proved not quite worthy of the hype when he blew an early lead, suffered three knockdowns, and quit in the 10th against Diego Corrales. Before that, stock was slipping anyway due to near-disaster against unknown Jorge Barrios (KO 12) and snoozefest with Artur Grigorian (W 12) in lightweight debut.
Future: Willingness to take punches isn't there anymore, so maybe handsome "Popo" ought to get out at age 29. If he does continue fighting, can probably win another alphabet belt at 135.

26 VITALI KLITSCHKO
World Heavyweight Champion 34-2 (33)

Last Year's Ranking: 49
Status Report: After vaulting into the top 50 last year with a brave effort against Lennox Lewis, rise continued when popular Ukrainian established himself as king of weak heavyweight division following Lewis' retirement. Knockout wins over Kirk Johnson (KO 2) and Corrie Sanders (KO 8) were both emphatic and fun.
Future: Most likely first challenger is tough but safe Monte Barrett, probably in December. Opinions are varied on how long the flawed but imposing champion can reign.

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Klitschko finishes off undertrained Johnson

27 JOE CALZAGHE
Super Middleweight 37-0 (30)

Last Year's Ranking: 24
Status Report: Took an easy one against Mger Mkrtchian (KO 7) in February and hasn't fought since. Was preparing to step up to light heavyweight against Glencoffe Johnson, but a back injury, combined with personal problems, led to cancellation.
Future: As of press time, had an October fight scheduled against an undetermined foe (Scott Pemberton and Kabary Salem were being considered). Still apparently planning to move up to 175, where his best chance for a big fight comes if Antonio Tarver and Roy Jones can't come together for a rubber match.

28 PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM
WBC Flyweight Titleholder 52-2 (29)

Last Year's Ranking: 34
Status Report: Has been extremely busy, scoring three title defenses and two non-title wins in past year. Title bouts came against Hussein Hussein (W 12), Masaki Nakanuma (W 12), and Luis Angel Martinez (KO 5). Overcame nasty cut over left eyebrow, caused by accidental headbutt, to finish Martinez. Fighting almost exclusively in Thailand and Japan, leaving American fight fans deprived of seeing gutsy, all-action southpaw.
Future: Seemingly easy defense against Diosdado Gabi scheduled for early-October.

29 LORENZO PARRA
WBA Flyweight Titleholder 23-0 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Venezuelan seemingly came out of nowhere to upset previously undefeated Eric Morel (W 12) and win alphabet strap. Surprisingly, struggled a bit more in tallying successful defense over Japan's Takefumi Sakata (W 12).
Future: Frequent trips to Asia, where it's easier for a 112-pounder to make decent money. May mix in a mandatory defense in France against skillful but untested Brahim Asloum.

Parra plunges a left into Sakata's face

30 KASSIM OUMA
Junior Middleweight 19-1-1 (13) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 85
Status Report: Sizzling wins over J.C. Candelo (KO 10) and Carlos Bojorquez (KO 8) had Ugandan steadily climbing the 154-pound ratings, but a back injury knocked him out of scheduled June rematch with Verno Phillips for the vacant IBF belt. Though a bit inconsistent, one of the most exciting young fighters around.
Future: Now that he's healed, it looks like the rescheduled bout with Phillips will happen in October with Phillips' alphabet title on the line.

31 VERNO PHILLIPS
IBF Junior Middleweight Titleholder 38-8-1 (20)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Solid wins over Bronco McKart (W 10), Michael Lerma (W 10), and Julio Garcia (KO 1) led battle-tested veteran to title-winning bout with Carlos Bojorquez (KO 6). On a seven-fight winning streak, the 34-year-old's longest in nearly a decade. Garcia win was especially sensational.
Future: Rematch with Kassim Ouma, who outpointed him in a September '01 thriller, is likely before the year is over.

32 OSCAR LARIOS
WBC Super Bantamweight Titleholder 52-3-1 (35)

Last Year's Ranking: 38
Status Report: Busy four-fight schedule since last year's rankings includes a trio of title defenses over Kozo Ishii (KO 2), Napapol Kiatisakchokchai (KO 10), and Shigeru Nakazato (W 12), plus a non-title bout with Jesus Perez (W 10).
Future: Should have survived late-August title defense against Angel Chacon by time you read this. Currently rated number one by THE RING, but needs to beat either number two Israel Vazquez (in a rubber match) or third-ranked Mahyar Monshipour to claim vacant world 122-pound title.

33 KATSUSHIGE KAWASHIMA
WBC Super Flyweight Titleholder 26-3 (18)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Japanese puncher surprised by taking alphabet strap with first-round blastout of respected titleholder Masamori Tokuyama, who was making his ninth defense.
Future: Scheduled for easy first defense against journeyman Raul "Baby" Juarez in September. After that, undefeated Californian Jose Navarro is his alphabet mandatory, but a rubber match with Tokuyama, who holds an earlier win over him, is also possible.

34 CHRIS BYRD
IBF Heavyweight Titleholder 37-2-1 (20)

PHOTO BY NICK PETROCCI

Last Year's Ranking: 19
Status Report: Southpaw stylist took a precipitous fall without officially losing a fight. Had a lackluster showing against Fres Oquendo (W 12) that most viewed as a gift decision, then stood in front of Andrew Golota for 12 rounds and came out with a draw in a fight in which he was heavily favored. Might just be on the downside at age 33.
Future: Ironed out contract squabbles with promoter Don King and is scheduled to face behemoth Jameel McCline in November.

Byrd finds Oquendo with his southpaw jab

35 MARK JOHNSON
Junior Bantamweight 44-3 (28) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Victories over previously unbeaten Fernando Montiel (W 12) and Luis Bolano (KO 4) highlight four-win comeback streak that has revitalized career following kayo loss to Rafael Marquez in 2002.
Future: May or may not be set for November bout on marathon Don King pay-per-view show against IBF titlist Luis Perez, probably the best 115-pound match that can be made on this side of the Pacific Ocean. Discussions were ongoing as of our press deadline.

Johnson hands Bolano his first loss

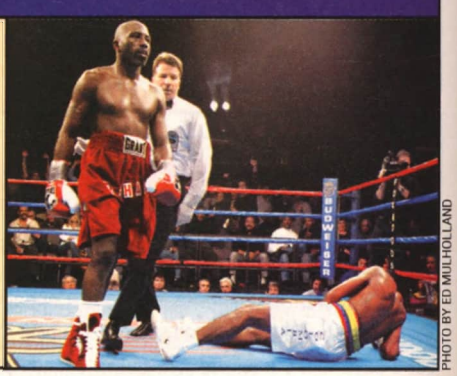


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

36 ZAB JUDAH
Welterweight 31-2 (22) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 36
Status Report: Revealing campaign since last RING 100 seems to have defined where Judah stands: an athletically gifted fighter too undisciplined to win at the very highest level. After a meaningful but boring win over DeMarcus Corley (W 12), concentration lapses cost him against world welterweight champion Cory Spinks (L 12). Also scored one emphatic victory, over Jaime Rangel (KO 1), and one narrow victory, over ancient Rafael Pineda (W 12).
Future: Rematch with Spinks looks likely.

Judah jolts Pineda with a right

37 ANTONIO MARGARITO
Welterweight 30-3 (21) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 41
Status Report: A pair of second-round kayo wins over Maurice Brantley and Hercules Kyvelos kept the menacing Mexican at the top of the 147-pound ratings. Both fights were meaningless mismatches, but hard-hitting 26-year-old did his job, coming through in style.
Future: Scheduled to fight Daniel Santos at junior middleweight in September, and success could very well mean a permanent move up to the 154-pound class.

38 JORGE ARCE
WBC Light Flyweight Titleholder 36-3-1 (27)

Last Year's Ranking: 45
Status Report: Overpowered respected Joma Gamboa (KO 2) and Melchor Cob-Castro (KO 5) in his fourth and fifth title defenses. On a 16-fight winning streak since loss to Michael Carbajal in '99, stands clearly as leading challenger for world champ Rosendo Alvarez. Came in under the limit for Cob-Castro despite previous difficulties making 108 pounds.
Future: Mandatory challenger is Juanito Rubillar, whom he decisioned in 2001.

39 JESUS CHAVEZ
Junior Lightweight 40-3 (28)

Last Year's Ranking: 53
Status Report: Texas-based buzzsaw won WBC super featherweight belt from Sirimongkol Singmanasak (W 12), but lost it to Erik Morales (L 12) in his first defense. Showed tremendous grit by staying competitive and lasting the distance against Morales despite injuring his right shoulder in the second round.
Future: Recovering from rotator cuff surgery and hoping for another crack at Morales.

Chavez wings a hook at Morales

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

40 VIVIAN HARRIS
WBA Super Lightweight Titleholder 24-1-1 (16)

Last Year's Ranking: 44
Status Report: Made progress with wins over Souleymane M'baye (W 12) and Oktay Urkal (W 12), the latter a close majority decision against a tough foe. Brooklyn-based Guyanese is a quality fighter, but don't be fooled by belt the WBA took away from Kostya Tszyu and gave to him. It's meaningless.
Future: Seemed headed toward biggest payday of his career in planned bout this fall with Ricky Hatton, but as of press time, negotiations had broken down.

41 ALEXANDER MUNOZ
WBA Super Flyweight Titleholder 25-0 (24)

Last Year's Ranking: 39
Status Report: Venezuelan has gone 2-0 since the last RING 100, but looking beyond the numbers, it wasn't a very good year for "Explosivo." First, his 23-fight kayo streak ended against Hidenobu Honda (W 12), and then Eiji Kojima, who was easily vanquished by Munoz in two rounds in July '02, lasted 10 rounds in January '04.
Future: WBA has mandated that next challenger must be "interim" titlist Martin Castillo, a formidable young foe.

42 MIGUEL COTTO
Junior Welterweight 20-0 (16)

Last Year's Ranking: 61
Status Report: Most consistently impressive fighter from the 2000 Olympic class continued steady progression to the top with wins over Demetrio Ceballos (KO 7), Carlos Maussa (KO 8), Victoriano Sosa (KO 4), and Lovemore Ndou (W 12). Sosa blowout was particularly eye-opening, while Ndou gave Puerto Rican the sort of test that should make him better in the long run.
Future: September bout with fellow unbeaten Kelson Pinto presents danger. If favored Cotto prevails, it's time for a top five junior welter. Showdown with Floyd Mayweather could eventually be huge.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Undefeated Cotto corners Ndou

43 ZSOLT ERDEI
Light Heavyweight 20-0 (13)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Skillful Hungarian emerged from total obscurity to upset Dariusz Michalczewski-conqueror Julio Gonzalez (W 12) in a one-sided boxing match. Followed that up with a narrow points win over unbeaten but unknown Hugo Garay of Argentina.
Future: After September fight with ordinary Alejandro Lakatus, rematch with Gonzalez or meeting in Germany with Michalczewski seem best bets for a meaningful fight.

44 LUIS PEREZ
IBF Junior Bantamweight Titleholder 22-1 (14)

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Last Year's Ranking: 71
Status Report: Showed that his first win over Felix Machado was no fluke by dishing out a one-sided beating in their December '03 rematch. Fierce Nicaraguan lefty hasn't fought since, unfortunately.
Future: Promoter Don King wanted to match him with Mark Johnson in November, but "El Demoledor's" management appeared to be pulling the plug. It would be a shame if attractive fight doesn't happen.

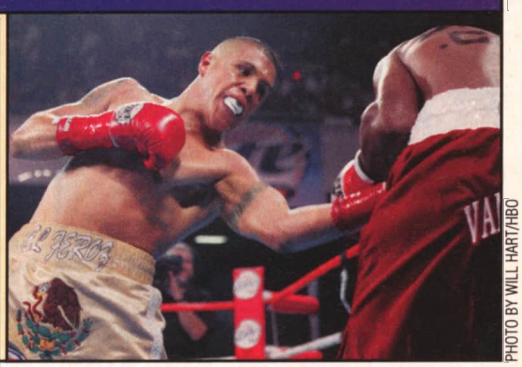
Perez snaps a hard jab at Machado

45 JUAN LAZCANO
Lightweight 33-3-1 (25)

Last Year's Ranking: 63
Status Report: One huge win, one huge loss for "The Hispanic Causing Panic" since last year's ratings. First, he scored a career-best victory over a faded but still credible Stevie Johnston (KO 11). Then, in a bout for the vacant RING lightweight title, proved incredibly game but slightly outgunned against Jose Luis Castillo (L 12).
Future: Given the way his face looked after the Castillo fight, he could use a rest. We'd love to see him in with Julio Diaz or Juan Diaz, though.

46 FERNANDO VARGAS
Junior Middleweight 24-2 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: 18
Status Report: "El Feroz" takes a tumble due to unimpressive performances against Fitz Vanderpool (KO 6) and Tony Marshall (KO 7), and inactivity since due to chronic back problems.
Future: It's looking bleak for the wildly popular 26-year-old, who has said he won't fight until at least '05, giving his back a chance to heal. It wouldn't be a shock if he never fights again, but if he does give it one more shot, it will be as a full-fledged middleweight.



Vargas digs to Vanderpool's body

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

47 PAUL SPADAFORA
Junior Welterweight 38-0-1 (15)

Last Year's Ranking: 43
Status Report: Following taxing draw with Leonard Dorin at lightweight, "Pittsburgh Kid" took 11 months off, then moved up to 140 pounds and scored wins over unknowns Ruben Galvan (W 10) and Francisco Campos (KO 10). Light-hitting defensive whiz hasn't yet earned a ranking in boxing's deepest weight class.
Future: Has had his name tossed around in discussions with Floyd Mayweather, Ricky Hatton, and Arturo Gatti, but remains outside the big-fight mix. Biggest pending fight is in the courtroom, where he faces allegations of shooting his fiancee.

48 VICTOR BURGOS
IBF Junior Flyweight Titleholder 37-13-3 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: As a heavy underdog, fought to an entertaining draw with 108-pound world champion Rosendo Alvarez, proving himself a much better fighter than his record suggests. Furthered that impression by wiping out respected former titleholder Fahlan Sakkreerin (KO 6) in next fight. Began career 24-12-1 (12), but has gone 13-1-2 (10) since '99.
Future: A rematch with Alvarez makes sense, but discussions have gone nowhere. Will eventually have to make mandatory defense against winner of eliminator between Wyndel Janiola and Eric Ortiz.

49 BEIBIS MENDOZA
Junior Flyweight 29-2 (23)

Last Year's Ranking: 46
Status Report: Won an interim belt by scoring an easy victory over once-formidable Yosam Choi (W 12) in December '03—but that was Colombian's only fight in the last 12 months. Inactivity has caused him to dip precariously close to the bottom half of top 100.
Future: Tedious style won't fill arenas, but as a mandatory, a fourth fight with world 108-pound champion Rosendo Alvarez is looking likely.

50 RICKY HATTON
Junior Welterweight 36-0 (26)

Last Year's Ranking: 79
Status Report: Scored career-best win against Ben Tackie (W 12), but otherwise continued building record against dubious opponents with nice records, such as Dennis Holbaek Pedersen (KO 6), Carlos Wilfredo Vilches (W 12), and Aldo Rios (KO 9). Swarming style makes for fan-friendly fights.
Future: Though big in his hometown of Manchester, England, "The Hitman" would like to be a star internationally. A victory over Vivian Harris would have been a step in that direction, but negotiations for that fight collapsed just before press time.

Hatton rocks Rios with a right

51 GLENCOFFE JOHNSON
IBF Light Heavyweight Titleholder 40-9-2 (27)

Last Year's Ranking: 91
Status Report: Oft-screwed veteran got screwed again last November in bout with Clinton Woods (D 12) for vacant IBF strap, but finally took home the title by winning February rematch (W 12) convincingly. Growing in confidence, Jamaican fighting better than ever at age 35.
Future: Will get payday and chance of a lifetime as comeback opponent for Roy Jones in September. Prohibitive underdog, but if Jones bears mental scars from kayo loss to Antonio Tarver, Johnson has a chance.

Johnson breaks through against Woods

52 JOHNNY BREDAHL
WBA Bantamweight Titleholder 55-2 (26)

Last Year's Ranking: 50
Status Report: Kept from going completely stale by making two title defenses, the second and third of his rather inactive reign. Scored unanimous decisions in native Copenhagen, Denmark, over David Guerault and Nobuaki Naka, two relative unknowns with glossy records.
Future: Possible defense against interim titleholder Julio Zarate, a decent Mexican fighter on a good run. Likelihood of unification with Rafael Marquez or Veerapol Sahaprom looks slim.

53 ERIC MOREL
Junior Bantamweight 34-1 (18)

Last Year's Ranking: 30
Status Report: Suffered stunning upset loss to then-anonymous Lorenzo Parra (L 12), ending flyweight title reign after five successful title defenses. Parra sent the usually defensively sound Wisconsin-based Puerto Rican to the canvas for the first time in his career. "Little Hands Of Steel" began comeback as 115-pounder with win over Jesus Rojas (W 12).
Future: Pending sexual assault charges make it hard to predict what's to come for former Olympian. If boxing career continues, should be a factor at 115.

54 HOWARD EASTMAN
Middleweight 39-1 (35)

Last Year's Ranking: 57
Status Report: Kept busy against fringe contenders, beating badly faded ex-titlist Hassine Cherifi (KO 9) and then streaking Russian Sergey Tatevosyan (W 12) while maintaining status as one of Bernard Hopkins' mandatory challengers. Has won seven in a row—all in England—since losing majority decision to William Joppy in '01.
Future: Will patiently wait for Hopkins while continuing to play it safe against another ordinary foe, Jorge Sendra of Spain, in September.

Eastman works downstairs against Tatevosyan

55 MASAMORI TOKUYAMA
Junior Bantamweight 30-3-1 (8)

Last Year's Ranking: 29
Status Report: Lost WBC super flyweight belt and status as top man in the division with shocking first-round kayo loss to Katsushige Kawashima in June. Japan-based North Korean, making his ninth title defense, suffered first loss in 6½ years. Earlier in the year, outpointed mandatory challenger Dimitri Kirilov.
Future: As he also holds a win over Kawashima, rubber match logical, but some rebuilding may be necessary first.

56 IRENE PACHECO
IBF Flyweight Titleholder 29-0 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: 56
Status Report: Another year of pointless inactivity for capable Colombian. Only one fight since last year's ratings, an easy blowout of overmatched Damaen Kelly (KO 7) in September, featuring three knockdowns by "Mambaco." Has made just six defenses in five-year reign.
Future: Recently signed with Warriors Boxing, who pledge to keep him busier. Due for mandatory in September against RING-rated and undefeated Vic Darchinyan.

57 YUTAKA NIIDA
WBA Minimumweight Titleholder 16-1-3 (8)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Returned from two-year retirement and lost split decision to Noel Arambulet in challenge for WBA belt, but prevailed via unanimous decision in the rematch to take over THE RING's number-one spot at 105 pounds. Japanese 25-year-old switched seamlessly from conventional stance to southpaw to confuse Arambulet.
Future: We'd all like to see a fight with Eagle Kyowa, THE RING's number-two ranked contender, for the vacant world strawweight title. A meeting with WBA "interim" titlist Juan Landaeta is more likely.

58 JOHN RUIZ
WBA Heavyweight Titleholder 40-5-1 (28)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: His style may stink, but "The Quiet Man" did score two quality victories in the past 12 months, over Hasim Rahman (W 12) and Fres Oquendo (KO 11). Seems to have put his embarrassing loss to Roy Jones behind him.
Future: Will take on Andrew Golota in November, in what could be an ugly foulfest.

Ruiz raps Rahman with a jab

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

59 EAGLE KYOWA
WBC Strawweight Titleholder 13-0 (5)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Splashed onto the scene with a dominating victory over Mexico's Jose Aguirre (W 12), the top man in the division at the time, to win the WBC belt in just his 12th fight. Also looked good in first title defense, against Satoshi Kogumazaka (Tech. Win 8).
Future: Since they're both based in Japan, maybe a match against THE RING's number-one strawweight, Yutaka Niida, for the vacant world title, isn't completely unrealistic.

60 SCOTT HARRISON
Featherweight 22-2-1 (12)

Last Year's Ranking: 60
Status Report: Lost ground with surprise loss to Manuel Medina (L 12), but bounced back to stop the Mexican veteran in the 11th round of a rematch. Enhanced standing as top-flight featherweight with follow-up wins over Walter Estrada (KO 5) and world-rated William Abelyan (KO 3).
Future: Claims he's ready for the division's elite—Manny Pacquiao, Juan Manuel Marquez, and Marco Antonio Barrera.

Harrison gains revenge on Medina

61 INJIN CHI
WBC Featherweight Titleholder 29-2-1 (18)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Physically imposing, iron-chinned Korean made huge strides in two-fight series with respected Michael Brodie (D 12, KO 7). Brodie got hometown help on scorecards in thrilling first encounter in Manchester, England, but rematch in same arena was brutally conclusive. New beltholder followed up with first alphabet defense, a 10th-round kayo of Japan's Eiichi Sugama.
Future: Nothing scheduled as of press time. Don't expect Main Events to throw mandatory challenger Rocky Juarez in with this brute.

Unrelenting Chi takes out Brodie

62 FELIX STURM
Middleweight 20-1 (9)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Losing a controversial 12-round decision to Oscar De La Hoya on HBO PPV in his first U.S. appearance was the best thing that ever happened to him. Suddenly a worldwide attraction instead of a regional favorite.
Future: Could get a crack at the Bernard Hopkins-De La Hoya winner, or an eventual HBO fight against Olympic conqueror Jermain Taylor.

Sturm takes De La Hoya to the limit

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

63 FERNANDO MONTIEL
Junior Bantamweight 28-1-1 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: 40
Status Report: Suffered his first pro loss, dropping a majority 12-round decision to comebacking Mark Johnson. Fifth-round knockdown scored by "Too Sharp" was the difference. Has since rebounded with a couple of kayo wins over ordinary opposition in Roberto Lopez (KO 3) and Samuel Lopez (KO 3).
Future: Still talented enough and young enough at 25 to overcome setback against Johnson.

64 JAVIER CASTILLEJO
Junior Middleweight 58-5 (40)

Last Year's Ranking: 58
Status Report: Trio of wins over fair-to-middling opposition—Ignacio Ramos (KO 2), Genaro Rios (KO 3), Enrique Campos (KO 5)—has kept the 36-year-old Spaniard in the middle of the 154-pound rankings.
Future: Would love the payday of defending worthless "interim" belt against top alphabet contender Fernando Vargas, but Vargas has said chances are slim he'll ever fight at 154 again. Expect more easy wins over obscure opposition instead.

65 JULIO GONZALEZ
Light Heavyweight 36-2 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Snapped Dariusz Michalczewski's 48-bout unbeaten streak in major upset, winning a 12-round decision and a minor belt in Germany, but lost to little-known Zsolt Erdei (L 12) in return visit. Tallied one minor win since, outpointing Olando Rivera over 10.
Future: Rematch with Michalczewski best bet for significant payday. It may come, but first Michalczewski targeting devalued belt held by Fabrice Tiozzo.

66 STEVE JOHNSTON
Lightweight 35-3-1 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: 35
Status Report: Soaked up the worst beating of his career when Juan Lazcano hammered him into an 11th-round kayo defeat in September 2003. Did score an early knockdown, but otherwise, it was mostly one-way traffic. "Li'l But Bad" hasn't fought since.
Future: Age (32), tough fights, inactivity, and legal problems have all taken a heavy toll on classy southpaw. Days of being counted among the division's best seem numbered.

Johnston shows signs of slippage against Lazcano

67 JULIO DIAZ
IBF Lightweight Titleholder 30-2 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Impressive win over Courtney Burton (KO 11) led to shot at Javier Jauregui (W 12) and annexing the IBF 135-pound strap. Has come a long way since one-round kayo loss to Juan Valenzuela in '02, which prompted many to write the Californian off.
Future: Maybe an intriguing showdown with Juan Diaz, whom "The Kidd" called out in the immediate aftermath of "The Baby Bull's" win over Lakva Sim.

68 DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI
Light Heavyweight 48-1 (38)

Last Year's Ranking: 28
Status Report: How's this for irony? The guy Roy Jones was afraid to fight in Germany ended up getting outpointed by onetime Jones victim Julio Gonzalez in Hamburg. Split decision defeat spoiled "The Tiger's" bid to equal Rocky Marciano's 49-0 mark. Has not fought since.
Future: Hoping to come back against Fabrice Tiozzo in the fall. If successful, a rematch with Gonzalez is possible.

69 DANIEL REYES
IBF Mini Flyweight Titleholder 34-1-1 (29)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Hard-hitting Colombian captured IBF 105-pound belt with sixth-round kayo of Edgar Cardenas and then defended against Roberto Leyva (KO 3), who had handed him his only pro loss, in 2001.
Future: There was talk of an alphabet unification with Ivan Calderon, but instead penciled in for September defense against Muhammad Rachman in Indonesia.

Reyes destroys Cardenas for strawweight strap

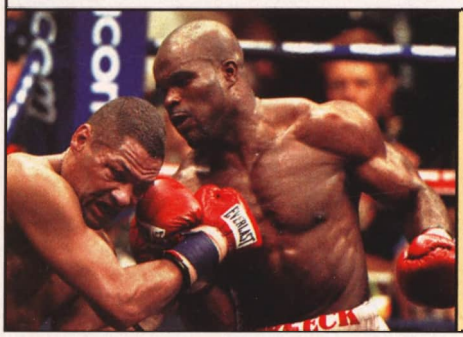
PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

70 WAYNE BRAITHWAITE
WBC Cruiserweight Titleholder 21-0 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: 78
Status Report: "Big Truck" shifted directly into top gear against Luis Pineda (KO 1), then maintained momentum against Louis Azille (W 12) before downshifting in the middle rounds and coasting to mixed reviews. A serious puncher who can also box a bit when he chooses to, but lacks consistency and isn't hard to hit.
Future: October 2 fight with Jean-Marc Mormeck at Madison Square Garden will crown a RING cruiserweight champion.

The RING 100

71 JEAN-MARC MORMECK
WBA Cruiserweight Titleholder 30-2 (21)



Last Year's Ranking: 69
Status Report: Dipped slightly in rankings by (a) not fighting for 14 months, and (b) struggling somewhat with Virgil Hill (W 12), a man he stopped in their first meeting. Muscular Frenchman is a medium-volume pressure fighter, a threatening force who gets stronger as the rounds wear on.
Future: Will face his most dangerous opponent yet on October 2, when he clashes with fellow titlist Wayne Braithwaite for the vacant RING championship.

Mormeck blasts Hill with an uppercut

72 YODSANAN NANTHACHAI
WBA Super Featherweight Titleholder 43-2-1 (35)

Last Year's Ranking: 75
Status Report: Well-conditioned Thai bodybanger made American debut in August, comfortably outpointing slickster Steve Forbes at Foxwoods. Before that, won a couple of non-title fights and survived a second-round scare to turn away little-known Ryuhei Sugita (KO 7) in February title match.
Future: Mandatory challenger Jorge Barrios is no joke, as those who saw Barrios' fight with Acelino Freitas know.

Yodsanan finds Forbes with a straight left

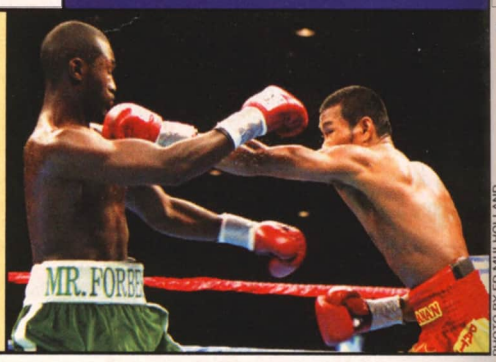


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

73 DeMARCUS CORLEY
Junior Welterweight 28-3-1 (16)

Last Year's Ranking: 37
Status Report: "Chop Chop" had a rough year, stepping up against two of the few 140-pounders faster than him and losing to both. First, he suffered one knockdown in losing listlessly to Zab Judah (L 12), then gave a more spirited effort but was knocked down twice en route to falling to Floyd Mayweather (L 12).
Future: Gatekeeper status beckons for 30-year-old D.C. southpaw unless he takes a step back and rebuilds against some easier opponents.

74 OKTAY URKAL
Junior Welterweight 34-2 (10)

Last Year's Ranking: 73
Status Report: Sturdy Germany-based Turk, who made his name in close 2001 loss to Kostya Tszyu, reinforced solid rep by extending highly regarded Vivian Harris the distance in another narrow 12-round points loss. Third-round knockdown scored by Harris was the difference. Prior to that, dominated unknown Krzysztof Bienias (W 12) last November.
Future: 1996 Olympic silver medalist seems destined for the second tier. Expect a handful of successful European title defenses, followed by another competitive loss when he steps up again.

75 ISRAEL VAZQUEZ
IBF Junior Featherweight Titleholder 36-3 (27)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Young veteran (turned pro at 17, now 26) has rebuilt impressively following May '02 loss to division leader Oscar Larios, capping strong run with meaningful win over skilled Jose Luis Valbuena (KO 12) for vacant IBF belt on HBO Latino broadcast. Boasts an exciting style and a first-round kayo win over Larios seven years ago.
Future: Rubber match with Larios to fill THE RING's 122-pound championship is a natural. If that doesn't happen, mandatory challenger Art Simonyan should pose a stiff challenge.

76 JERMAIN TAYLOR
Middleweight 21-0 (16)

Last Year's Ranking: 84
Status Report: Best prospect from 2000 U.S. Olympic team progressing slowly but steadily, going 5-0 (4) in last 12 months. Set CompuBox jab records against Freddie Cuevas (W 12), hammered Rogelio Martinez (KO 7) and hopeless Alex Rios (KO 1), then beat up natural junior middleweights Alex Bunema (KO 7) and Raul Marquez (KO 9). Seems to have the tools, but needs a real challenge.
Future: There's talk of an HBO fight against steppingstone-to-be William Joppy. Lesser known Kingsley Ikeke or Sam Soliman would probably provide better tests.

Taylor slaps around overmatched Marquez

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

77 MARTIN CASTILLO
Junior Bantamweight 26-1 (16)

Last Year's Ranking: 72
Status Report: Well-schooled Mexican kept fairly active but ultimately treaded water the past year, winning three fights against non-top-10 opponents. Bouts with Alberto Ontiveros (KO 4) and Roger Galicia (W 12) went as expected, but "El Gallo" had to rally from behind to beat anonymous Hideyasu Ishihara (KO 11) for an interim alphabet belt in May.
Future: Due to face WBA titlist Alexander Munoz eventually. May fight on September 18 Hopkins-De La Hoya undercard first.

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

78 JOSE ANTONIO AGUIRRE
Strawweight 31-2-1 (19)

Last Year's Ranking: 54
Status Report: Had 18-fight winning streak snapped and lost top spot in boxing's lightest weight class when then-unknown Eagle Kyowa easily outpointed him in major upset. Tiny Mexican, making his eighth title defense, fell behind early and just couldn't get going. Bounced back with win over sub-.500 Jorge Romero (W 10).
Future: Wants rematch with Eagle. High alphabet ranking could help him get it.

79 MANNY SIACA
WBA Super Middleweight Titleholder 18-4 (16)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Tough, heavy-handed Puerto Rican came back from inactive spell to wipe out trialhorse Demetrius Jenkins (KO 4), then surprise streaking Anthony Mundine via split decision in Mundine's native Australia. Second-round knockdown was the key, helping Siaca to prevail in fourth WBA 168-pound title try.
Future: As yet unscheduled mandatory against Denmark's Mads Larsen won't be easy. Larsen's only defeat in last eight years was a controversial majority decision to Sven Ottke.

Siaca drops Mundine en route to upset

80 ANTHONY MUNDINE
Super Middleweight 20-2 (15)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Naturally talented Aussie managed to squeeze career-best win and career-worst loss into an eight-month span. Proved himself on the world level by handling highly rated Antwun Echols (W 12), but took a tumble when he lost to underdog Manny Siaca (L 12). In between, came off the canvas to halt ordinary challenger Yoshinori Nishizawa (KO 5).
Future: Scheduled to come back in September against non-threatening opponent. After that, rematch with Siaca or grudge fight against countryman Danny Green both possibilities.

81 NELSON DIEPPA
Junior Flyweight 21-1-2 (12) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Returning after almost a two-year layoff, Puerto Rican scored wins over former titleholder Kermin Guardia (KO 1) and previously undefeated Ulises Solis (W 12). Solis victory produced some head-scratcher scoring, with two judges tallying 120-108 cards, and the third seeing it 114-114. Looked like a close defensive battle to us.
Future: Hard to tell how much he has left at age 33, since Guardia win was so impressive and Solis win so shaky.

82 IVAN CALDERON
Strawweight 20-0 (4)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: 2000 Puerto Rican Olympian joined the top 100 powered by victories over former 105-pound titlists Alex Sanchez (W 12), Edgar Cardenas (KO 11), and Roberto Leyva (W 12). Leyva win was decent, but not nearly as dominant as expected. Southpaw has excellent footwork and defense, but very little punching power.
Future: Promoter Bob Arum was working on a meeting with IBF titlist Daniel Reyes earlier in the year; that would be a good test if negotiations can be re-opened.

83 MAHYAR MONSHIPOUR
WBA Super Bantamweight Titleholder 25-2-2 (16)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Just days after the press deadline for last year's RING 100, won alphabet belt from Salim Medjkoune (KO 12), and also prevailed in a rematch (KO 8) 10 months later. In between, France-based Iranian defended against inexperienced Jairo Tagliaferro (KO 7). Hasn't lost since 1998.
Future: Scheduled to take on former beltholder Yoddamrong Sithyodthong in Paris on November 8.

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Monshipour (right) overpowers Medjkoune

84 JOAN GUZMAN
Junior Featherweight 21-0 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Highly touted Dominican broke through with savage victory over Agapito Sanchez (KO 7) on HBO Latino. The 5'7" destroyer is living up to his "Little Tyson" nickname.
Future: Needs to be more active, having fought just twice in '02, twice in '03, and once so far in '04. WBO mandatory against undefeated Sod Looknongyangtoy possible. Seems a threat to take over the division if given the opportunity.

85 JUAN DIAZ
WBA Lightweight Titleholder 25-0 (12)

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: "Baby Bull" showed he belongs with exciting, clear-cut win over veteran Lakva Sim (W 12) for alphabet belt. Also beat the likes of Martin O'Malley (KO 2), Joel Perez (KO 6), and Francisco Lorenzo (W 10) in past year. Has improved significantly since infamous September '01 crying episode.
Future: Fellow titlist Julio Diaz called him out, but there's no need for 20-year-old Texan to rush into that. Expect one or two safer defenses first.

Diaz fires a hook at Sim

86 ANTWUN ECHOLS
Super Middleweight 30-5-1 (26)

Last Year's Ranking: 55
Status Report: Lost a lot of ground with upset defeat to Anthony Mundine (L 12) in Australia for vacant alphabet belt. In comeback fight, survived a brief scare en route to defeating journeyman Ross Thompson (W 10). Aggressive puncher always makes exciting fights, but is 0-3 in title bouts.
Future: With his potent punch, remains a threat to anyone at 168, but his best opportunities might be behind him. Had no fights scheduled as of press time.

87 DANNY GREEN
Super Middleweight 18-1 (17)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Most viewed fifth-round disqualification loss to Markus Beyer as a screw-job, but Australian bounced right back to stop Eric Lucas (KO 6) in a breakthrough performance. Didn't look as sharp in next fight, against Sean Sullivan (W 10), and had to be rushed to the hospital afterward suffering from heat exhaustion.
Future: An October 17 fight with Andre Thysse in Perth, Australia, is planned. Now represented by DiBella Entertainment, ready to break onto American scene.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Green tears into Lucas in Montreal

88 LEONARD DORIN
Junior Welterweight 22-1-1 (8)

Last Year's Ranking: 42
Status Report: Canada-based Romanian has a heckuva chin—but that couldn't save him from getting starched by Arturo Gatti (KO by 2). One thudding left hook to the body collapsed the stubby workhorse, spoiling his undefeated record. Earlier in the year, made junior welter debut with meaningless win over Chucky T (KO 4).
Future: Retirement is one option the cut-prone 34-year-old former lightweight beltholder is considering. Could probably beat some of the lower-ranked 140-pounders, though, if he decides to stick with it.

89 HASIM RAHMAN
Heavyweight 39-5-1 (32)

Last Year's Ranking: 67
Status Report: After disappointing loss to John Ruiz (L 12), compiled four-fight winning streak over third-rate competition, beating Al Cole (W 10), Mario Cawley (KO 2), Rob Calloway (KO 2), and Terrance Lewis (KO 2). Former world heavyweight champ sucked up his pride, fought for modest money, and seems to have rebuilt his confidence.
Future: Still a factor in thin heavyweight division, yearning for another shot at Ruiz. Expected to fight, against an opponent to be determined, on Don King's November pay-per-view show.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Rahman gets back on the winning track against Cole

90 CARLOS HERNANDEZ
Junior Lightweight 40-4-1 (24)

Last Year's Ranking: 97
Status Report: Won one, lost one, and proved worth in both. Scored victory over Steve Forbes (Tech. Win 10) in defense of IBF strap, then lost belt in a gutsy battle against Erik Morales (L 12). "Famoso" took a great deal of punishment against "El Terrible," but never stopped churning away, and rallied late to make the fight close on one of the judges' cards.
Future: Quality payday against fellow Morales victim Jesus Chavez being mentioned.

91 DANIEL SANTOS
Junior Middleweight 28-2-1 (20) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 80
Status Report: Scored a lopsided win over ordinary Michael Lerma (W 12) in April, but that was the 28-year-old Puerto Rican's only fight since last year's RING 100. One of those fighters who usually appears highly vulnerable, but manages to keep winning.
Future: Scheduled as of press time to take a major step up in September and face Antonio Margarito on HBO. They fought to a one-round head-clash no-contest in '01.

92 LOVEMORE NDOU
Junior Welterweight 38-7-1 (24)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Australia-based South African scored two biggest "wins" of 11-year career in 12-round points defeats to top-rated Sharmba Mitchell and supremely gifted Miguel Cotto. Mitchell fight arguably could have gone the other way. Has also managed five victories in past year, including one over faded Carlos Rios (KO 5).
Future: Has proven himself an entertaining fighter and a threat to anyone at 140 pounds, and will probably get another chance on HBO or Showtime.

93 RATANACHAI VORAPIN
Bantamweight 57-8 (39)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Cracked this list for first time in long career by scoring excellent win over streaking Cruz Carbajal (W 12), the highlight of a busy 6-0 (4) year since last RING 100. Steel-chinned Thai southpaw on an 11-fight winning streak since losing at featherweight in '02.
Future: Totally unknown and unproven Hungarian Robert Isaszegi is somehow listed as mandatory challenger for WBO belt. Rematch with Carbajal also a possibility.

94 JORGE BARRIOS
Junior Lightweight 41-2-1 (29) with 1 no-contest

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Proved himself on the world stage by giving Acelino Freitas hell before falling in the 12th round of one of 2003's best fights. Was ahead on one card and even on another through 11. Has since scored two marking-time wins in native Argentina, over Claudio Martinet (W 12) and Diego Alzugaray (W 10). A wild character with an awkward but exciting fighting style.
Future: Would have been well-served to follow up with another meaningful fight by now, but had nothing scheduled as of press time.

Barrios gives Freitas a serious tussle

95 JESSE JAMES LEIJA
Junior Welterweight 47-6-2 (19) with 1 no-contest

Last Year's Ranking: 99
Status Report: Mild upset win over hot prospect Francisco "Panchito" Bojado (W 10) put 38-year-old Texan back in the mix in loaded junior welter division. One of the most savvy ring craftsmen around, the former 130-pound titlist mixed up his attack brilliantly to overcome Bojado's physical advantages. Prior to that, kept sharp with wins over Fernando Mena (KO 2) and Marteze Logan (Tech. Win 8).
Future: Dream fight would be against Arturo Gatti, and it's a realistic possibility.

Leija outfoxes younger Bojado

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

96 KERMIT CINTRON
Welterweight 24-0 (22)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Made huge strides into contention in past 12 months, going 5-0 (4) with wins over the world-class duo of Teddy Reid (KO 8) and Elio Ortiz (KO 6) on HBO and NBC, respectively. A 24-year-old who came to boxing later than most, Reading, Pennsylvania, powerpuncher is one of the sport's most exciting young fighters.
Future: Needed surgery to repair broken hand suffered in Reid fight and may be out of the ring for remainder of '04.

Cintron sends a heavy right Reid's way

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

97 JUNIOR WITTER
Junior Welterweight 29-1-2 (18)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Awkward Brendan Ingle-trained Brit has improved since 2000 loss to Zab Judah, winning 14 straight since—all by knockout, all within five rounds. Last year included wins over Fred Kinuthia (KO 2), Oscar Hall (KO 3), and, for the vacant European title, Salvatore Battaglia (KO 2).
Future: All-England showdown with Ricky Hatton doesn't look like it's ever going to happen, and Witter isn't in any alphabet's top 10, so expect more treading-water fights against unknowns.

98 THOMAS DAMGAARD
Welterweight 34-0 (26)

Last Year's Ranking: 89
Status Report: Carefully matched Dane had a weird year, ending an 11-month layoff by fighting twice in three weeks in February. Defeated typically mediocre and anonymous opposition in Luiz da Silva (KO 2) and Christopher Henry (Tech. Win 5).
Future: Finally taking a significant fight—his first in nearly five years—when he meets minor beltholder Jose Rivera on October 2 at Madison Square Garden.

99 JAVIER JAUREGUI
Lightweight 48-11-2 (34)

Last Year's Ranking: not rated
Status Report: Up-and-down Mexican veteran finally broke through and won a belt, beating Leavander Johnson (KO 11) for IBF title vacated by Paul Spadafora—but then lost it in first defense, getting thoroughly outmaneuvered by Julio Diaz (L 12). Returned to action with close win over James Crayton (W 10).
Future: After a strong two-year run, 31-year-old appears to be headed downhill, although he has surprised us before.

100 NOEL ARAMBULET
Strawweight 20-3-1 (10)

Last Year's Ranking: 68
Status Report: Two-fight series with Yutaka Niida showed the best of fleet-footed Venezuelan and the worst. First, he handed Niida first career defeat, retaining WBA title via split decision on opponent's home turf. In rematch, failed to make weight (by half a pound), was stripped of title, and then lost a unanimous decision.
Future: Can probably still make 105 pounds, and if he stays in the division, rubber match with Niida logical.

Arambulet absorbs a hook from Niida

GATTI vs. MAYWEATHER

The Evolution From Mismatch To Superfight

By Eric Raskin

Meet Fighter Number One. He's putting the emphasis on offense, not defense. He's slugging it out, looking for knockouts. He wants to entertain the fans, and if that means getting hit more than he has to, so be it.

Meet Fighter Number Two. He's boxing, moving, maneuvering, and concentrating on defense. He'll take the knockout if it comes, but he'll also gladly take a points win. He wants to excel as a pugilist, and if that means sending fans home mildly disappointed, so be it.

One of these fighters is Arturo Gatti. The other is Floyd Mayweather. But, if you haven't been paying attention lately, which one is which may surprise you.

Fighter Number One is Mayweather, who's trying to be a crowd-pleaser and, in his last two fights, has succeeded. Fighter Number Two is Gatti, who's trying to prove he has skills to match his legendary heart and, in his last two fights, has succeeded. Against Philip Ndou and De-Marcus Corley, Mayweather gave fans more bang for their buck than they're used to getting from him. Against Gianluca Branco and Leonard Dorin, Gatti—dare we say it?—left some paying customers feeling unfulfilled. They've both had what you might call "Gatti-tude" adjustments—changes in the amount of "Gatti" permeating their ring personas.

Despite the recent shift in styles, Mayweather at his most entertaining is still a step below Gatti at his least, and Gatti at his most skillful still doesn't compare move-for-move with even a Mayweather who's de-emphasizing defense. But the two of them are, unexpectedly, coming closer together stylistically.

The question is, are they going to come closer together in the way that fans desire? Is Gatti-Mayweather, a fight that once would have been denounced as a disgusting mismatch, going to become a reality? And, of all the unthinkable things Gatti has done in his career, could he possibly do the most unthinkable thing of all—hand Mayweather his first defeat?

Of course it sounds crazy. As far back as 1998, Gatti was supposedly washed-up after losing three straight fights, and Mayweather was a rising force and the Fighter of the Year. The very same Angel Manfredy who defeated Gatti that January was blown out in two rounds by Mayweather that December. Mayweather would have been a huge favorite at the time, and he was only getting better while Gatti was only getting worse. That was *six* years ago. Now, somehow, their paths appear to be crossing in a fight that would almost certainly be the richest possible pairing in today's junior welterweight division. And, despite the assertions made by Mayweather after his 140-pound debut in May ("I've been chasing Arturo Gatti for the longest time. The guy doesn't even want to fight."), Gatti is eager to make it happen.

"Mayweather, don't worry, I'm not chicken," said Gatti after the Dorin fight, his mouth and his stomach—freshly tattooed with the word "warrior"—in full agreement. "I want you as much as you want me, my man."

But *should* he want Mayweather? Or is he letting his machismo get in the way of what's best for him in a business sense?

There's no question that Gatti, 32, will be the underdog if he fights this 27-year-old marvel who is regarded by some as the best fighter on the planet. He could play it much safer, keep making millions (he pocketed $1.75-mil for the Dorin fight), and extend this four-fight winning streak he's on. Alternative names being batted around include Paul Spadafora and Jesse James Leija, and while neither is a gimme for Gatti, "Thunder" would be the favorite in either matchup. Those who believe Gatti *can't* beat Mayweather would probably advise him to steer toward those less challenging challenges.

But if ever there was a time when Gatti *might* be able to beat Mayweather, it's now. "Pretty Boy" is still small for a 140-pounder, whereas Gatti is just about the biggest fighter in the division. That's one of the reasons it's problematic to point to

PHOTO BY MICHAEL O'NEILL/HBO

Will Gatti be able to stick out his tongue in triumph if plans to rumble with Mayweather (above) come to fruition? The boxing world is buzzing over this potential showdown that not long ago would have been laughed off as a mismatch.

PHOTO BY WILL HART

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Gatti was brilliant in his tactical execution against Leonard Dorin, using flurries to the head like this to set up the left to the body that knocked his foe out. It was the easiest win against a championship-level opponent that Gatti's ever had.

how pound-for-pounder Oscar De La Hoya manhandled Gatti three years ago and say Mayweather would do the same; Gatti was a junior welter fighting a man about to depart for junior middle, and now he'd be in the opposite position, staring down the size slope at Mayweather. And after seeing the devastating left to the body that left Dorin breathless as the second round was drawing to a close, how can you dismiss this guy out of hand? Gatti's trainer, Buddy McGirt, certainly doesn't.

"People tell me I'm crazy, but I see Arturo beating Floyd," McGirt said without hesitation. "People underestimate how hard Arturo punches. And there are certain flaws I see in Floyd, flaws Arturo can take advantage of. Not *if*, but *when* Arturo takes advantage of those flaws, he'll beat Floyd."

Not wanting to tip Mayweather off and give away any of his strategy, McGirt refused to get any more specific about the "flaws" he sees. When asked whether, as with Dorin, the focus will be on Mayweather's body, McGirt merely said, "We're gonna use a little bit of everything."

Logic tells us, even if McGirt won't, that a fighter like Mayweather is much easier to hit in the body than the head. And logic also tells us that a trainer only a few months removed from helping Antonio Tarver find a way to ice the supposedly untouchable Roy Jones just might be shooting straight when he says he sees flaws in Mayweather.

Even so, Gatti *is* the underdog. If everything goes according to conventional wisdom, he *will* lose. And whereas defeat used to have very little effect on Gatti's star power and earning power, times are changing for him. Against Mayweather, he may not be in the no-lose situation in which so many prohibitive underdogs find themselves.

"I think Arturo has elevated himself now to the point where he would lose something if he lost to Mayweather. Wins and losses matter more now," said HBO blow-by-blow broadcaster Jim Lampley. "A year or two ago, it would've been like the De La Hoya fight—nice paycheck, no chance. But there's more at stake now. It's not just about being wildly entertaining anymore. If he boxes and loses

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

Buddy McGirt, now six fights into his tenure as Gatti's trainer, continues to maximize the former face-first slugger's potential. McGirt was correct in predicting that Dorin had the perfect style for Gatti, and he also predicts Gatti will defeat Mayweather if that superfight comes off.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

Against the 5'4" Dorin, Gatti did his share of jabbing to try to keep the fight at a comfortable distance. Back in the old days, Gatti might have been inclined to let Dorin walk in and initiate toe-to-toe exchanges, but those days are long gone—and Gatti's fans don't seem to mind much.

a lopsided fight to Floyd on points, and it isn't exciting, that could affect his appeal."

So far, though, Gatti's appeal has gone untouched—as evidenced by the crowd of 11,863 at Boardwalk Hall in Atlantic City for the Dorin fight, up more than 600 from the Branco attendance and just a few hundred shy of a sellout. To some, it was a bummer that a fight with so much slugfest potential was over before it could really get started, at just 2:55 of the second round. But to others, it was a sensational one-punch knockout and a victory for their hero, and that was good enough for them. It was certainly good enough for Gatti.

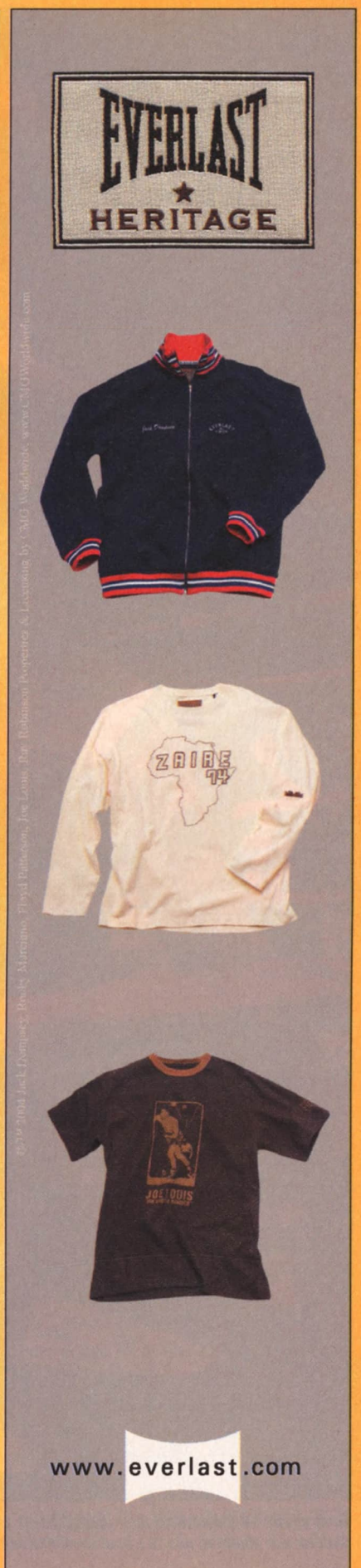
"I was using my jab, and I lured him into a great bodyshot," Gatti, 38-6 (29), said after the fight. "He was coming in, his hands were up in the air, and I put everything on that left hook. All my weight was shifted to the left, and once he went down, I knew it was over. I raised my hands after the count of three."

A shockingly easy victory like this over a proven tough guy like Dorin, 22-1-1 (8), who claimed he had never been knocked down before in his life, can have a profound effect on observers. Nobody, not even Gatti or McGirt, expected a two-round night, so when it went down the way it did, some instant reassessment occurred. The most outspoken reassesser was Carl Moretti, vice president of boxing operations for Gatti's promotional company, Main Events.

"With all due respect to the media and everybody out there," Moretti said at the postfight press conference, "with what this kid's been through in his career and how he's improved, I think it's time to start putting him on the pound-for-pound lists as one of the best fighters in the world."

Moretti, of course, brings a teeny-weeny bias to the table. With the likes of James Toney, Jose Luis Castillo, Rafael Marquez, Marco Antonio Barrera, and Cory Spinks all outside most people's pound-for-pound top 10, it's a stretch to suggest Gatti, who lost one of three fights with Micky Ward and struggled with unknown Branco, should be considered for that elite group. At least that's how THE RING sees it. And that's how Lampley sees it, too.

"I think that's a little overboard. I don't see him as one of the top 10 or 12 fighters in the sport," said Lampley. "But I see what Carl was getting at: Gatti's on the radar screen now. In the past, it wasn't about whether he won or lost, it was about the entertainment value. The fact that he's now being mentioned in regard to the pound-for-pound list is a perfect illustration of how the fulcrum has tilted in the Gatti world. I give Buddy and Gatti a lot of credit for constructing a vision of what he could



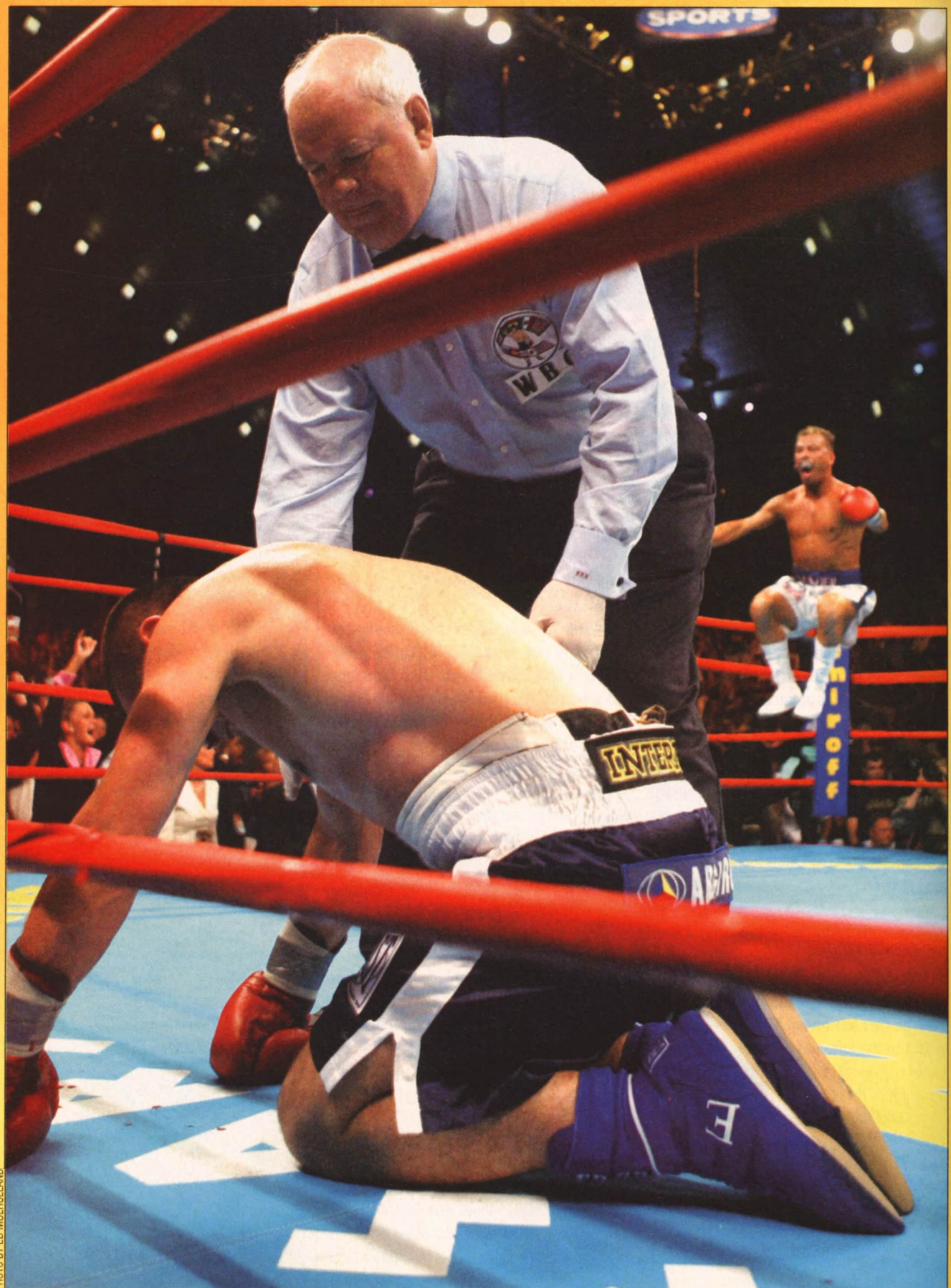


PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Gatti shows off his vertical leap (background) as referee Randy Neumann counts Dorin out with five seconds remaining in the second round. It was a sudden and shocking end to a bout most expected to be a Fight of the Year candidate.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

A happy, virtually unmarked Gatti enjoys his latest victory. Because he escaped the Dorin fight unscathed, he's planning on fighting again before the year is out, although early indications are that the Mayweather fight will have to wait until '05.

be, and following through on it. He's a vastly improved fighter."

So vastly improved that he can upset Mayweather? That's a question that can only be answered one way: by getting the number-one talent and the number-one attraction in boxing's deepest division together in the ring.

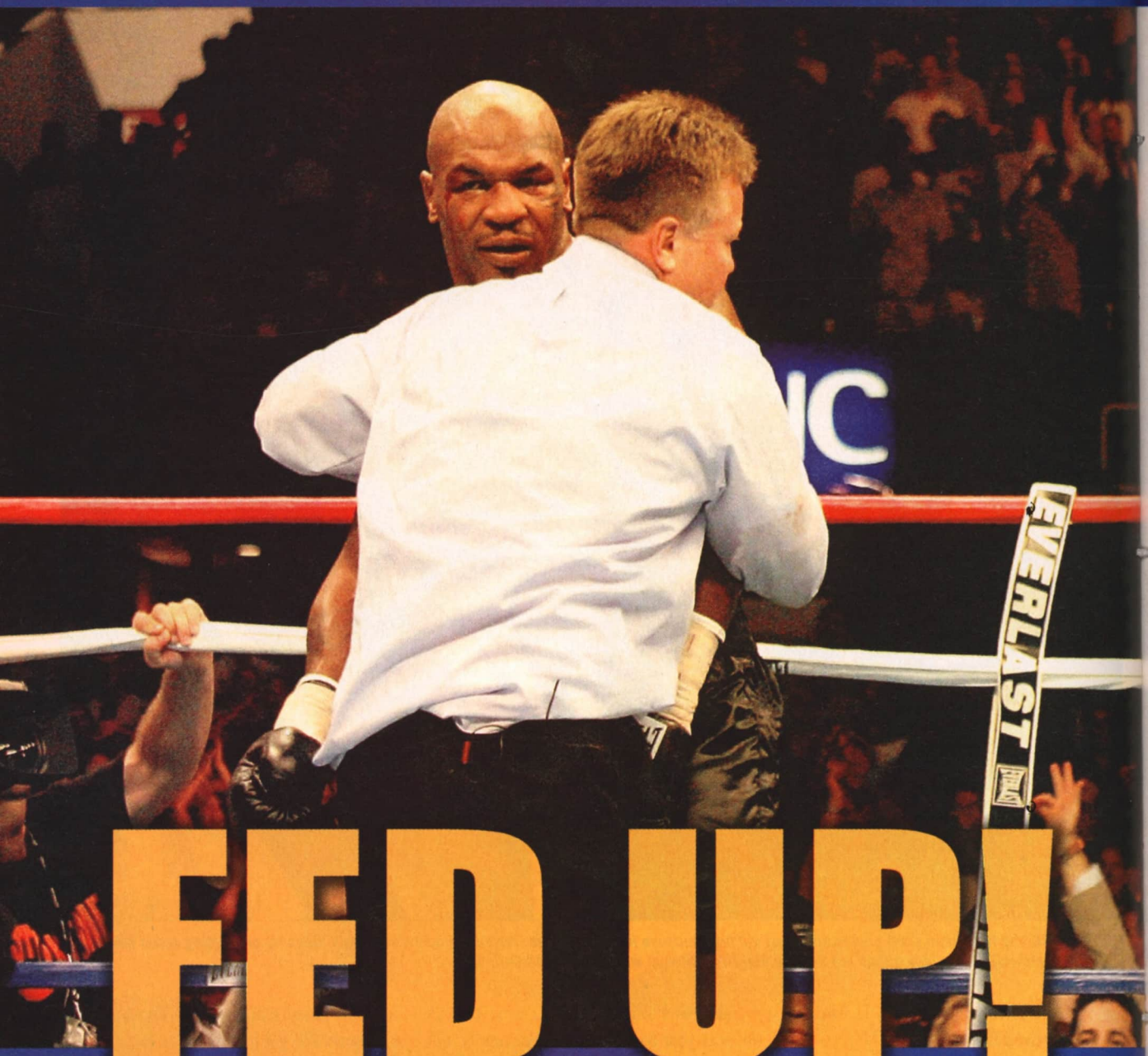
Gatti and Main Events announced just days after the Dorin fight that their schedule, revised to reflect the no-broken-hands, no-swollen-eyes nature of the Dorin destruction, will include a third bout in '04, in either November of December.

"I intend to fight again before the end of the year, maybe even on pay-per-view," said Gatti. "The bodyshot I ended my fight against Dorin with was a blessing because I came out of the fight without any injuries. But it also prevented me from getting the rounds that I wanted. I don't want to wait till next year to fight again, because it will mean that I'll have only fought two rounds in almost a full year."

The hitch is the HBO boxing calendar. With a major Showtime show (Kostya Tszyu vs. Sharmba Mitchell for the world championship in Gatti's division) to compete with on November 6, a Don King pay-per-view announced for November 13, the Winky Wright-Shane Mosley rematch on HBO on November 20, and an Erik Morales pay-per-view likely on Thanksgiving weekend, that leaves December—and HBO already has Vitali Klitschko penciled in to defend the world heavyweight title on either the 4th or the 11th. Perhaps whichever date Klitschko doesn't get will go to Gatti. But Gatti's manager, Pat Lynch, said even if HBO does find room for his fighter, a clash with Mayweather is a long shot to get ironed out before the calendar turns.

Everything about Gatti is a long shot, however. From some of his early-career back-from-the-brink wins, to his absurd resurrection in his 30s (Lynch himself said back in 2000 that he didn't expect Gatti to box beyond age 30), he's practically erased the word "impossible" from our vocabulary. Anything's possible with Gatti. Making the biggest payday of his career at age 32 or 33? Looking more and more possible. Ending up in the Hall of Fame? Looking more and more possible. Fighting Floyd Mayweather? Looking more and more possible. Beating Floyd Mayweather?

Admit it: It's looking more and more possible. ■



FED UP!

Is It Time For The Government To Take Over Boxing?

PHOTO BY MATTHEW STOCKMAN/GETTY IMAGES

Referee Dennis Alfred comes to the aid of knockout victim Mike Tyson in the fourth round of Iron Mike's fight with Danny Williams. The fight was held in Kentucky, a state with a lax drug-testing policy. A federal boxing commission would standardize regulations throughout the United States.

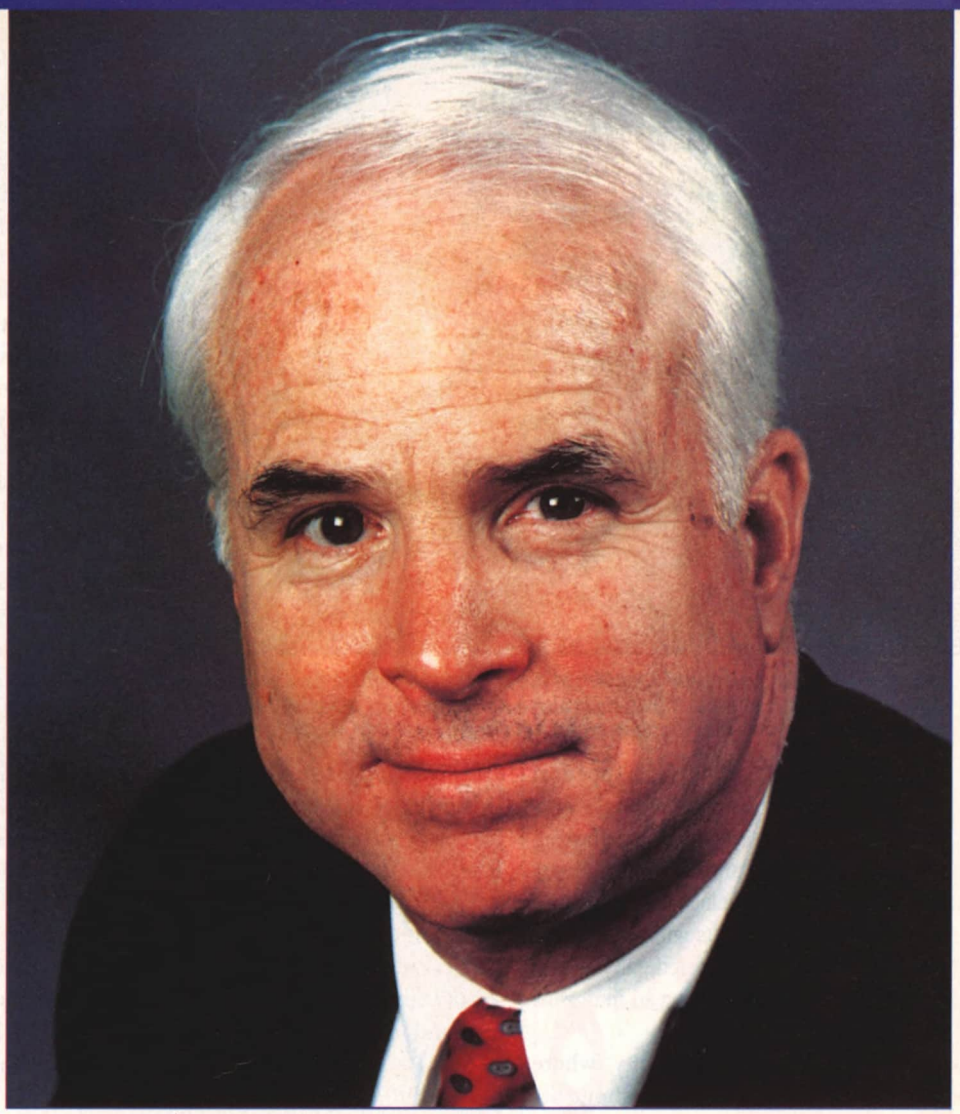
By David Mayo

In the age-old debate of states' rights vs. federal oversight, boxing always has come down on the side of the former, while cautiously yearning for the latter. Heavy policing of standardized rules by a federal commission, backed by U.S. Attorney General enforcement, makes for boxing's dream-state ideal. Honest promoters and managers. Scrupulous sanctioning bodies that stress competition and ratings legitimacy over fees. Well-trained judges and referees who rarely miss a call.

Then we awaken, rub our eyes, and focus on the imperfect reality.

Boxing traditionalists fear true colors have shown in the Feds' hands-off approach to enforcing the Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act, and that legislators and bureaucrats won't want to hear the word "boxing" after Arizona Senator John McCain leaves his chambers. They also cling to the concept that decentralizing power is a positive in any battle against corruption, so guess what will happen when the Feds give someone absolute power.

Politicians can't balance our national bankbook, so they aren't naturally inclined to spend diminished revenues on such folly as boxing. But they have grown tired of the garbage piled on boxing's doorstep. Until the last eight years, the only legislative attention boxing got was as an investigative target, until McCain pushed two successful reforms. His third and most ambitious—to form a federal commission—received Senate approval in March 2004.



Senator John McCain has already helped put two new boxing laws on the books, but so far they haven't been enforced very effectively. McCain is now championing legislation that would create a federal boxing commission.

At press time, the Professional Boxing Amendments Act remained mired in two House of Representatives subcommittees, but still represents the closest the U.S. government has come to establishing a federal boxing body. McCain's bill would create a bipartisan three-person United States Boxing Commission, with an executive director and general counsel. The commissioners would be presidential appointees, not all of the same political party. One would have prior state-level commission experience. One would be a physician, "if practicable," the bill reads.

Reformers and opponents look askance at each other. Reformers can mount mutually satisfying arguments from both state and national angles, saying that too many weak state commissions underscore the need for centralization and standardization of minimum requirements, and boxing's own tax revenues can cover its regulation costs. Opponents can do the same by outlining their suspicions about the steadfastness of a federal commission and an executive directorship that sounds dangerously like "czar," and fear that taxpayers will foot the bill for regulation.

The tilt in that argument always has favored state regulation. But then things happen. Big things. Real commerce situations. Real tax dollars. Real spinoff income for communities. Real stuff that gets non-boxing people interested in boxing. And sometimes those major events target states with weak boxing governances, where savvy insiders work the soft spots to their advantages, and local yokels are empowered to render decisions and determine consumer satisfaction.

"What I lack in the House [of Representatives] is a champion. Ninety-nine percent of those guys don't care about boxing."
—U.S. Senator John McCain

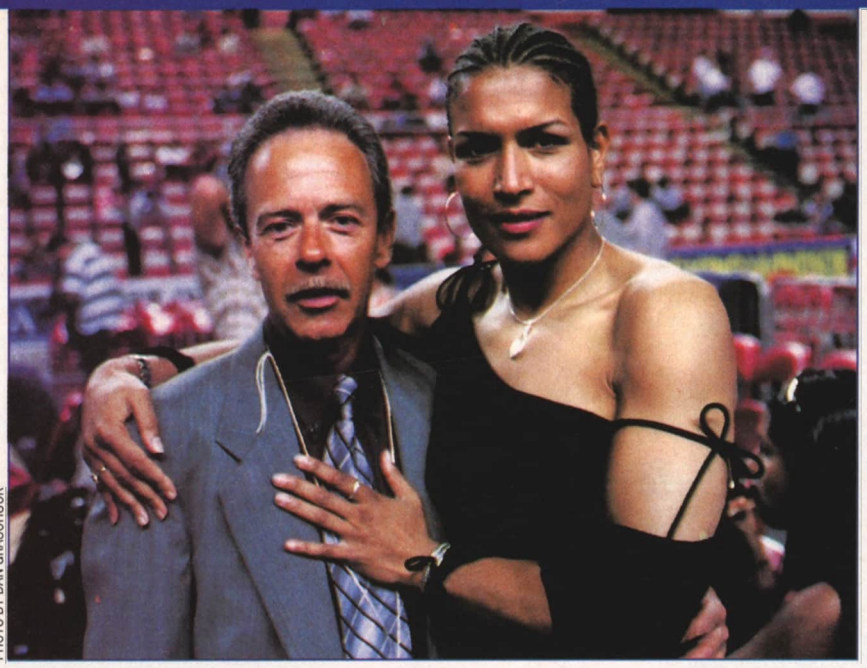


PHOTO BY DAN GRASCHUCK

Michigan boxing commissioner Brad Wright doesn't spend all of his time posing with attractive female fighters such as Lucia Rijker. He is also a fierce proponent of boxing reform and is fighting hard to improve regulation in his state, which has faced a great deal of criticism recently.

And sometimes they all happen at once—coincidentally overlapping a proposal for the most sweeping federal boxing reform in history—and the state governances and local officials all botch it at once, and sentiment shifts with the thought that standardizing boxing federally would be so much easier than doing so in dozens of state legislatures.

That happened in Kentucky, where Mike Tyson spoke lovingly about his ongoing affair with marijuana, and where boxers' drug tests coincidentally aren't screened for narcotics. It happened in Michigan, where Emanuel Augustus got shafted on the scorecards after he seemed to win a fight while admittedly under marijuana influence, prompting some to joke that the local judges merely suffered second-hand smoke inhalation while pilfering his victory. And it happened in Texas, where the Rocky Juarez-Zahir Raheem fight carried no drug overtones, just over-officiousness by a referee who dramatically altered the flow with three-point deductions and an ongoing verbal battle with Raheem's corner.

"Why do you think Tyson's fighting in Kentucky? Because they'll have him when nobody else will," said Bernard Fernandez, the *Philadelphia Daily News* writer and president of the Boxing Writers Association of America. "I'm not the biggest proponent of a federal commission. But states like Kentucky, Tennessee, and Michigan (the last three U.S. Tyson fight venues) are the best arguments for a federal commission."

Politicos with varying knowledge of boxing seem to develop a pinpoint jab when the sport's imperfections are exposed. Kentucky Governor Ernie Fletcher vowed to revamp his state commission after Tyson was licensed to fight Danny Williams in Louisville. In boxing-rich New Jersey, where Tyson also received a license this year, Governor James McGreevey said he wouldn't allow the troubled ex-champ in any state-owned facility. And in Washington, McCain actively hopes the FBI investigation of promoter Bob Arum produces indictments in time to fuel his drive for a federal commission.

McCain is the most important legislative boxing reformer in history. He successfully pushed the Professional Boxing Safety Act of 1996 and the Ali Act four years later, but finds his commission bill getting lukewarm House support.

"What I lack in the House is a champion," McCain told *Arizona Republic* boxing writer Norm Frauenheim. "Ninety-nine percent of those guys don't care about boxing."

The strength in McCain's bill would be a requirement that sanctioning bodies be licensed with the federal commission. Besides being subjected to the heightened scrutiny any licensee faces, the alphabet boys also would be required to provide specific reasons for ratings changes and create a format for fighters to protest ratings changes.

HBO and Showtime, though addressed with more legislative subtlety, would be subject to examination and possible reclassification as promoters. The original draft of the bill excluded premium and satellite television providers from classification as promoters, along with host hotels and casinos. But in backroom politicking led by McCain's boxing rival, Nevada Senator Harry Reid, the wording was changed to eliminate networks from that exclusion, and separate wording was inserted requiring the new federal commission to determine in its first year of existence what entities belong in the promoter classification. The new commission would be empowered to conduct hearings on the matter, then submit its findings to Senate and House committees. If premium and satellite providers ultimately were reclassified, they would be subject to the same financial disclosures as promoters.

"The Ali Act doesn't cure anything if it's not enforced. At the state level, we're trying to enforce it on individuals, but Washington can't even enforce it on a state. Why enact new laws if they're not enforcing the existing ones?"
—Michigan Boxing Commissioner Bradley Wright

All around the land, the States vs. Feds issue sizzles, but nowhere hotter than Michigan. That's where Augustus went into Courtney Burton's home state, admittedly with pot in his system, and scored what most ob-

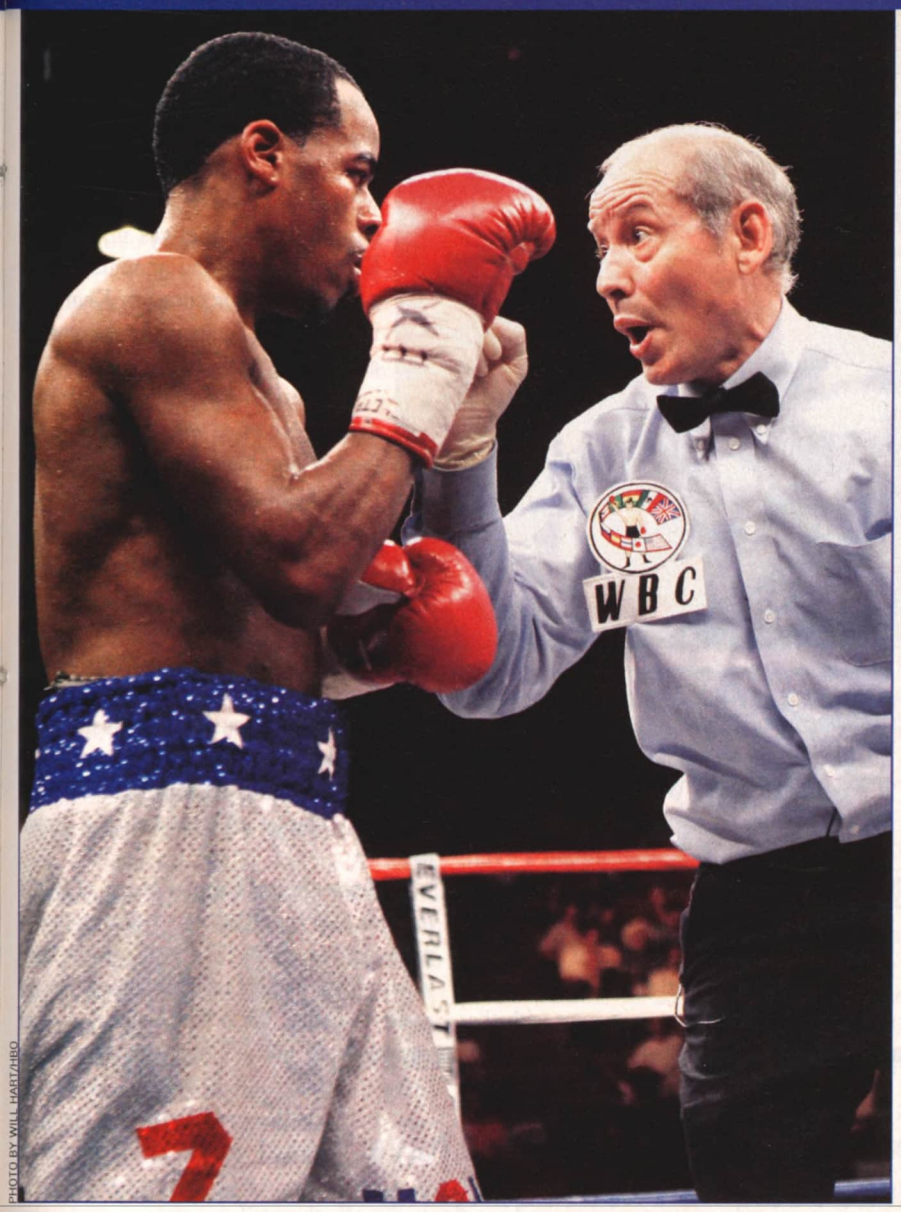


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Some believe that a federal commission would help reduce incidences where questionable officiating might give the appearance of favoring the hometown fighter. Recently, referee Robert Gonzalez (pictured issuing a warning to Zahir Raheem) was widely criticized for the way he handled the Rocky Juarez-Raheem fight in Juarez' hometown of Houston, Texas.

servers believed should have been a decisive win. But two judges with limited professional experience scored the fight for Burton by extreme margins of 99-90 and 97-92. The third judge had Augustus winning by four points.

Michigan Athletic Board of Control Chairman Bradley A. Wright railed at the decision and lobbied the director of the Department of Labor and Economic Growth to conduct a hearing on Burton-Augustus. The director indeed took the unusual step of calling an Athletic Board hearing about the decision, but not until eight weeks after the fight. The hearing, which also will address Augustus' positive drug test, still had not occurred at press time.

Wright is a reformer, but not federally. He has spent the last two years pushing for Michigan boxing reform. A bill to create a true state commission blew through the House 106-1, and seemed to have broad-based support, but stalled in Senate committee during the summer. At press time, a committee vote still had not been scheduled. Wright's frustration, compounded by the Burton-Augustus outcry, boiled over when the committee chairman's aide tried to prepare him for the death of the proposal.

"I told the guy, 'You may have to throw me out of the Senate chamber, but

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PHOTO BY JAY LASH

The Ali Act was supposed to prevent a conflict of interests involving promoters and managers. But there are still plenty of cozy promoter-manager relationships, such as the one enjoyed by Don King and his son, Carl, who manages a number of fighters his father promotes.

I'm not quitting.' That may not have been the right way to go about it. But we're too right on this. We're too correct to let the bad guys win," Wright said. "Not until I stand in a legislative chamber and someone says, 'No way, Brad Wright, in your lifetime, will this ever happen,' will I quit."

Wright, a licensed boxing judge, tried to insert an annual seminar for judges and referees into the reform bill. He estimated seminar cost at $1,000 annually, but that was enough to get it shot down. Meanwhile, Michigan has no formal instruction of pro boxing officials—just a two-year amateur boxing apprenticeship, and a check with your license application.

But while Wright favors state reform, he balks at a federal commission. Wright said he has informed state officials that he believes Michigan's $1,000-per-fighter minimum medical bout insurance is in noncompliance with the Ali Act, with no indication of a response. That could be because enforcement of the Ali Act doesn't fall on federal lawyers—it falls on the states, none of which has proven anxious to point out its own flaws in a federal district court.

"The Ali Act doesn't cure anything if it's not enforced," Wright said. "At the state level, we're trying to enforce it on individuals, but Washington can't even enforce it on a state. Why enact new laws if they're not enforcing the existing ones? I believe the more government gets into boxing, the more it costs and the more it gets screwed up. I'm not in love with the ABC (Association of Boxing Commissions). But 50 strong state commissions, adhering to the rules set forth by boxing people, is the best way."

"A federal commission over-empowers politicians who have no stake at all, no sweat equity, no knowledge, no emotional attachment, to the success of boxing. I see absolutely no advantage to that." —Investigative Internet writer Charles Jay

Lack of standardization in state commissions offers the most powerful argument in favor of a federal commission, and beefing up state commissions requires legislative upheaval on many battlefronts.

If Michigan boxing reform fails, it will be the second time since 2001. In Kentucky, the governor promises to overhaul the state commission because of the Tyson licensing issue, but what long-term cure does that provide? And where was the outcry in that state in 2001, when the ex-heavyweight champion in question was Greg Page, and he was injured in a Kentucky fight, and administered by a physician unlicensed in Kentucky, in violation of state commission rules and the Ali Act?

Inconsistencies not only from state to state, but often within a state, create further argument for a federal commission. State advocates counter that the potential for the same conflicts, with more far-reaching implications, would exist under federal rule.

Charles Jay, a boxing activist and Internet investigative writer, blames the ABC for officiating problems in places like Louisville, Houston, and Muskegon, Michigan, where local officials were at the center of controversy, in each instance after favoring a crowd favorite.

"Those things happen because that's the product the ABC has been trying to promote," Jay said. "The ABC wants states in complete control of officials. It doesn't matter whether the officials are any good or not, as long as they're from that state. It's like a testosterone challenge to show that the individual states, which are what the ABC promotes, are in charge."

In Louisville, referee Denny Alfred, heretofore unknown, deducted two points from Williams without previous warnings, then tolled a 10-count over crowd-favorite Tyson that would outlast some commercial egg timers.

In Houston, referee Robert Gonzalez took three points in three different rounds from Raheem, all for holding. Juarez, fighting in his hometown of Houston, won by two, four, and six points. Those numbers suggest the fight would have been a split decision for Juarez without the deductions, but cannot measure how Raheem's spirit was affected.

In Muskegon, two judges with only a handful of professional shows under their belts were assigned to Burton-Augustus.

One had not met the state-required apprenticeship of two years in amateur boxing before obtaining his professional license 20 months before scoring the fight for Burton, who hails from nearby Benton Harbor.

All three instances played out in front of television audiences and stung the states and networks—Showtime, HBO, and ESPN2—with equal disregard.

Jay favors privatization. He said he already has had substantive talks with one non-commission state about contracting boxing regulation to an expert traveling troupe, including a core group of top-shelf officials, with its own insurance system to shield states from liability.

"I would like to offer the option for certain states that find their regulation people are inadequate, insufficient, or just not cost-worthy, to attempt the privatization route," Jay said. "I think there are people who care about boxing reform, and that's why this is an important discussion. But there are a lot more people who don't care. All they care about is watching Mike Tyson. A federal commission over-empowers politicians who have no stake at all, no sweat equity, no knowledge, no emotional attachment, to the success of boxing. I see absolutely no advantage to that."

In the meantime, state commissions operate with fluctuating levels of effectiveness and enforcement. Full-fledged national oversight is a House vote and presidential signature away from reality, but the Feds already pawned off Ali Act enforcement onto the states' attorneys general, and there hasn't been a related prosecution anywhere. There's supposed to be a "firewall" created by the Ali Act between promoters and managers, but Don King and Carl King still do business together. And you can still smoke a joint before a fight, or drink from a narcotic-spiked water bottle between rounds, without fear of suspension based on your drug-test results in Kentucky.

"I think some federal oversight and guidelines would be good for boxing," said Dan Rafael, the *USA Today* boxing writer. "There needs to be some standardization. I just don't know whether a federal commission is the way to go." ■

David Mayo covers boxing for the Grand Rapids (Michigan) Press and is a regular contributor to this magazine.

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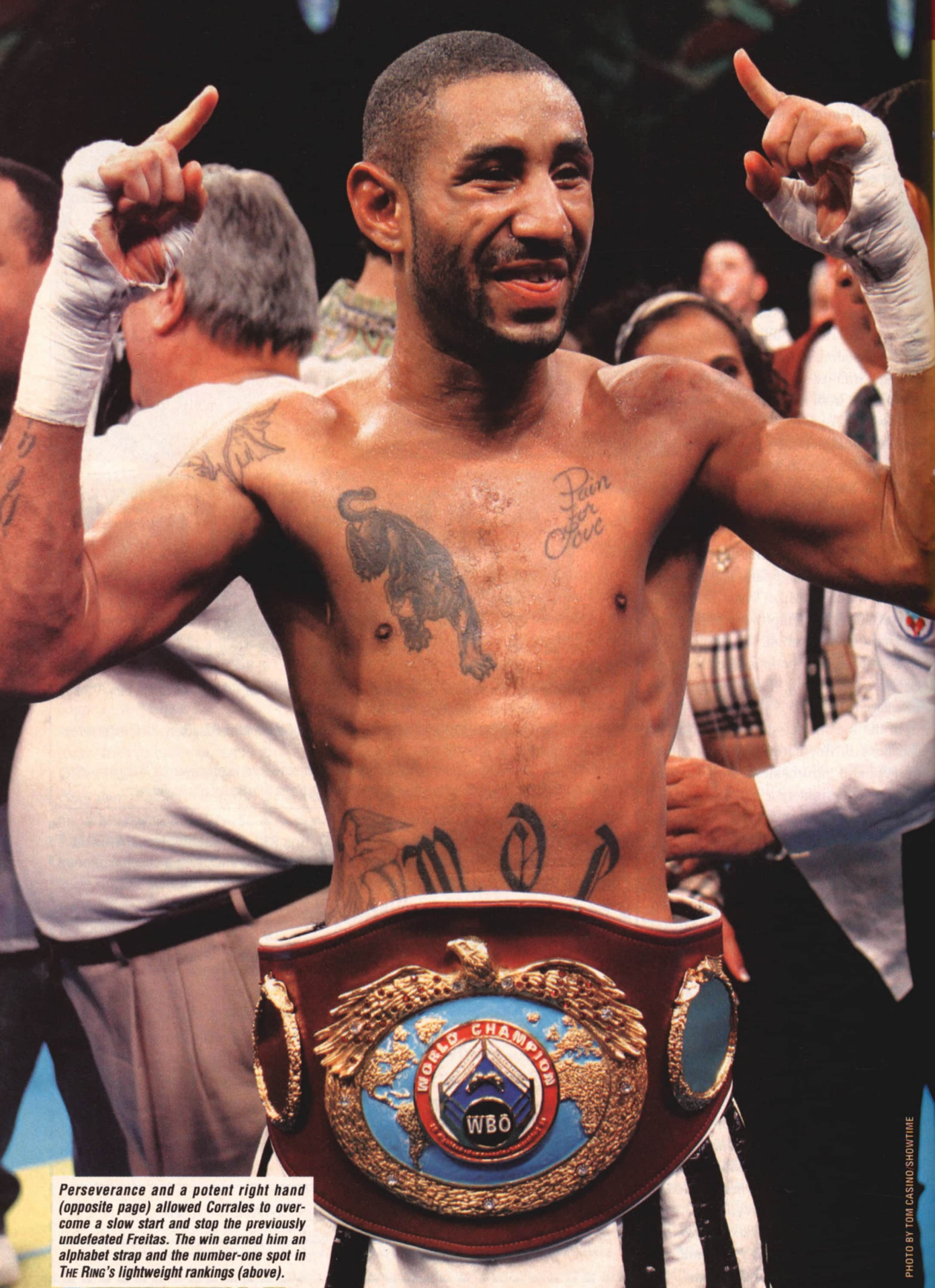

Perseverance and a potent right hand (opposite page) allowed Corrales to overcome a slow start and stop the previously undefeated Freitas. The win earned him an alphabet strap and the number-one spot in The Ring's lightweight rankings (above).

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

DIEGO CORRALES

Knocking Out Freitas ... And His Past

By Ted Bodenrader

If boxing is a pool of profound characters, few have brushed the depths of complexity like Diego "Chico" Corrales. Trying to get a clear read on THE RING's new number-one lightweight contender has been as difficult as keeping him on the canvas. But if one indisputable fact has emerged from the tangle of contradiction that has marked Corrales' life, it is that he will persevere in the face of adversity, as he did in August by rallying from behind to stop previously undefeated Acelino Freitas and tally the biggest triumph of his boxing career.

For years, we saw Corrales as a congenial, soft-speaking gladiator with a smile that glistened like the neon backdrop of Las Vegas, the city where he resides. And then when the darkness honed in, we watched as a felony conviction for assaulting his pregnant wife cast an ugly stain on a once-unblemished reputation. But if pro-

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

For most of the first seven rounds, Freitas used movement and spearing shots from the outside to build a substantial lead on the scorecards. Corrales was never seriously hurt, but seemed unable to cope with "Popo's" foot and hand speed.

fessional success can in some measure wash away personal disgrace, Corrales found redemption of sorts on the evening of August 7 when he punched Freitas into a state of bewilderment so befuddling that the bedraggled Brazilian descended into his own public purgatory.

But an hour before midnight, as a raucous, capacity crowd at Foxwoods Casino and a Showtime audience looked on, we didn't know what to make of this enigma before us, as we watched Freitas pound away on Corrales' troubled face. But as the battle between Corrales and Freitas produced an electric uproar from the mainly pro-Freitas gathering, perhaps the real conflict was brewing within Corrales himself. Through seven hard rounds, it seemed as if the demons of years past had returned once again, and they were on the verge of another full-body possession.

"I was watching this thing, trying to figure out what the hell was going on with him," confessed James Prince, Corrales' manager, who watched frantically from his ringside seat. "For whatever reason, he just wasn't getting it done. He told me after the fight that this was the game plan he had all along. I just wish he had told me about it *before* the fight."

After Corrales boldly withstood the early assault, however, it all began to make sense. It was around the seventh round that the 27-year-old began slithering forward like a cobra, waiting for his chance to strike, sensing that "Popo" was turning into poo-poo.

With his mouth sucking for oxygen, it was clear that Freitas, 29, was indeed

beginning to show a previously undetected vulnerability, and the effects of excessive legwork and an occasional hard punch from Corrales showed on his weary face. Then in the eighth, Corrales unleashed the kind of assault that not many men ever come back from, eventually dropping Freitas three times in as many rounds. The onslaught was so harsh, so deadly, that it convinced Freitas to shamefully quit at the 1:24 mark of 10th round.

For Corrales, who struggled through a four-year journey of hurt and self-doubts to get to this very moment, the abrupt ending spelled immediate vindication.

"This gave me a tremendous amount of satisfaction," admitted Corrales, battling back the tears during the postfight press conference. "A lot of *personal* satisfaction."

PHOTO BY GREGG MARINANE

Although he was out in front by large margins, as the rounds ticked by it became clear that Freitas was growing tired. This was especially visible between rounds when the Brazilian looked close to exhaustion.

Still, the memories of the troubles of 2001 never stray far from his mind. And perhaps they shouldn't. Corrales remembers well when a blooming future was clasped so firmly in his fists, when the fans came in droves and the opportunities were in abundance. And he won't forget what it was like to watch it all crumble haplessly at his feet, both his personal and professional lives churned into rubble. The Floyd Mayweather debacle, in which Corrales was knocked down five times en route to a 10th-round stoppage, coupled with his legal woes, converted Chico from shooting star to burned out meteorite virtually overnight.

Unfortunately, he'd have plenty of time to reflect on such claims in the 14 months to come. Not long after the shocking conviction for assaulting first wife, Maria, then pregnant with their child, Corrales found himself inside California's Duel Vocational Center, locked in a penitentiary of misery and despair.

"That wasn't an easy time for me at all," Corrales admitted. "It was like my whole world caved in on me in the matter of a couple of months."

Most difficult, Corrales admits, was holding on to the cloak of endearment that for so many years had defined him. As the defaming whispers began to circulate around the sport, it forced Corrales to look long and hard in the mirror.

"That was the hardest part," he said. "The conviction forced people to scrutinize me, to question me. Most people were saying, 'If he's such a nice guy, why is he turning around and doing things like that?' I became so sick of it, so sick of people judging me that I just wanted to escape it all. It was just so hard. I was so anxious to put it all behind me."

Corrales was sprung from prison in June 2001, but his confidence was still in shackles. Thankfully, second wife Michelle was there to greet him, holding the very key to setting him free.

"Right before I went away, I wasn't feeling very good about myself, about my life," said Corrales. "Everything had gone so wrong, so bad, but Michelle was the one that told me that no matter what happened, she'd always stay with me. I just wasn't sure if I believed her."

But on the day he walked free from the Tracy, California, jailhouse, Corrales was elated when a beautiful woman arrived to greet him.

"That was when things started to turn around for me," Corrales recalled of the liberating summer day. "Knowing that this woman had been there for me, and would continue to be, it's what's kept me going."

And Michelle stayed at Corrales' side through the next setback, last October's TKO loss to Joel Casamayor, in which he was deemed unfit to continue at the end of six rounds on account of a severely lacerated mouth.

That night, Corrales took away more than a thirst for revenge after one of the year's most grueling slugfests. He also took away Casamayor's trainer.

Joe Goossen abandoned Team Casamayor in favor of the hungry Corrales, and masterminded the triumphant return in the rematch, when Corrales kept the Cuban on the end of his jab and slammed him with right hands every time he tried to break through. The result was a split decision victory.

But as soon as Corrales had flung the Casamayor monkey from his back, his sights were set on the surging Freitas, regarded as one of the best lightweights in the mix. Freitas was a fearsome puncher with both fists, himself the owner of a 2002 decision win over Casamayor.

If the second Casamayor fight had gotten Corrales' career back on its feet, a win over Freitas should set it in flight. But for this slight leap in competition, a few changes were in order. For the Freitas task, Goossen also wanted to leap to the next weight class. At 135 pounds, the veteran trainer figured, Corrales' frail legs would be more fit for absorbing Freitas' bruising powerpunches.

As it turned out, the decision was a

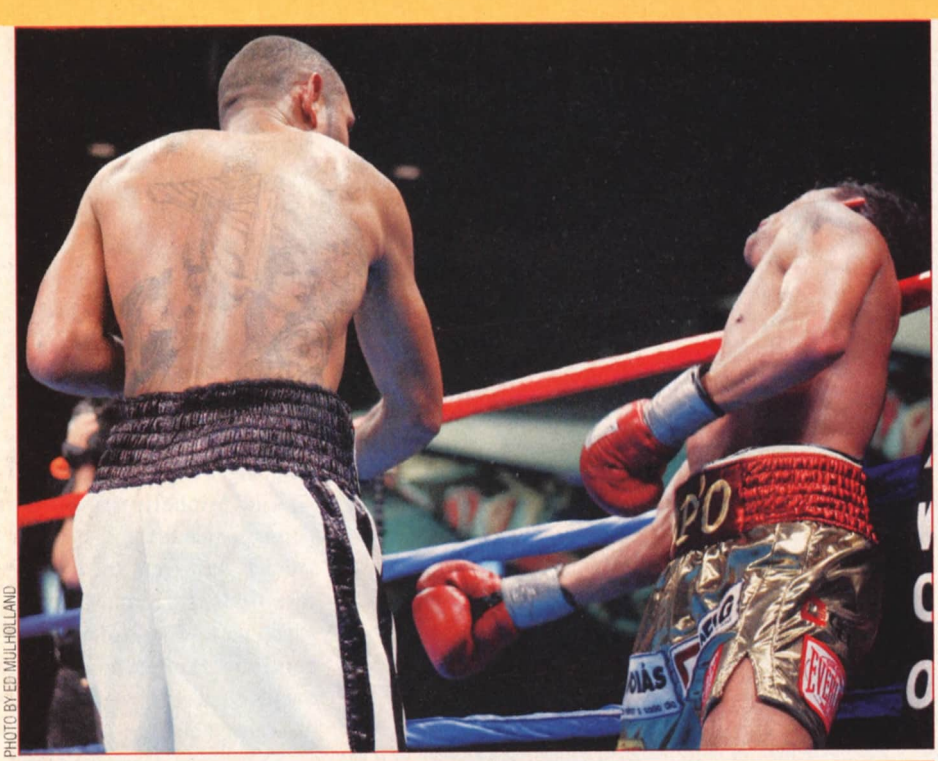

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PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Corrales snaps Freitas' head back with a thunderous right hand (top) as the fight takes a dramatic turn in the eighth round. All told, Freitas was knocked down three times (above) before signaling to referee Michael Ortega that he'd had enough in the 10th round.

wise one. Freitas, who lunged forward with wild left and right shots from the outset, could not tumble the Corrales foundation, no matter how many times his bombs hit the target.

Still, as the fight wore on, other concerns began to surface in the Corrales corner. Goossen watched helplessly as the smaller, busier Freitas outworked his man from the start. The jab that had worked so effectively in the Casamayor rematch was nowhere to be found. Through six rounds, two of the three judges had Corrales winning only one of them, while the third had Freitas pitching a shutout.

Sporting shiny gold trunks, Freitas was certainly looking golden. As for the man draped in black and white, nobody seemed to recognize him. At least, not until the seventh round. That was when a more familiar Diego Corrales finally showed up.

"I knew all along that the tide would change for us," assured Corrales, who waited patiently, like a seasoned sniper. "I knew the pace was on my side. The extra weight only made me feel stronger as the fight went on. We knew Freitas would be coming on a lot, and that he'd be dangerous early. But we were also prepared for it. We trained for it. We knew he couldn't just keep coming and coming all night like that."

By round eight, it was clear that Corrales had become the unyielding force. Cautious from the outset, he was now a focused predator. When a jarring right dropped Freitas midway through the eighth round, it was obvious that the tiring fighter had now become a marked man. Although a sharp right hand in the ninth caught Freitas on the button and dropped him flat on his back, it wasn't until the 10th round that Corrales would complete the job.

With Freitas boxed helplessly into a corner, Corrales provided him with the ultimate escape route. A right hand that landed on the ear dropped him to the deck for the third time in the night. Referee Michael Ortega didn't even need to finish the count. Freitas climbed back to his feet, took two steps forward, and then motioned to the ref that his work was done for the night and walked back to his corner.

"I was shocked when he did that," Corrales said. "People are trying to figure out why he did that, but only he knows the answer to that. It's hard to say what was going on in his mind. A puncher always has confidence in his punching power right

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Corrales celebrates the Freitas victory along with promoter Gary Shaw (far left), referee Michael Ortega, trainer Joe Goossen, and wife Michelle. "Chico" hopes that the big victory will help erase the memory of his past troubles in and out of the ring.

until the very end, so it's hard to say what happened to him."

While the "no mas" gesture was met with collective shock and lowered Freitas' record to 35-1 (31), it ignited a victory gala in the opposing corner.

"Diego had been waiting for a long time to say 'I'm back,'" explained promoter Gary Shaw, who watched a triumphant Corrales collapse into the arms of Goossen. "It wasn't quite time to say it after the Casamayor fight back in March. But I think after tonight, Diego can finally tell the world, 'I'm back.'"

And indeed he did, as the Corrales supporters drowned out the echoes of Brazilian chants and bongos from the previous hour, and rained down their sentiment in three-syllable chants.

"Dee-Ay-Go! Dee-Ay-Go! Dee-Ay-Go!"

For that moment, as Corrales, 39-2 (32), sucked in the sounds from the ring apron, the sweat still glistening off his bruised face, it solved the identity crisis that had been brewing inside him for years.

"It's been a long ride since the Mayweather fight," said Corrales. "[Prison] was the lowest moment for me—ever. There were times that I was losing faith in myself, but my team and my wife were strong enough to help me keep it."

Yes, life has shifted again for Corrales, and this time, he is hellbent on riding it all the way to the top.

"I'm looking for the long-term gratification," he insisted. "All that pound-for-pound stuff, that's not what I fight for. I want my legacy to live longer than my career does. Hopefully, someday I'll be able to hear some kid talking about how he grew up idolizing me."

In order to do so, however, he must dispatch any chances of repeating the mistakes of 2000 and 2001.

"I'm not proud of the [conviction], but I think it was a good thing in a way," said Corrales. "It allowed me to put that whole situation behind me and move forward in my career with a much clearer head. In all, I think the experience has made me much more of a man."

So now, as Corrales turns his attention to the cream of the lightweight division and beyond, he hopes to bury the most daunting opponents of years past, discarding them from his life once and for all. They are the convicted felon, the troubled husband, and the inconsistent pugilist who've been dwelling inside him for years.

But as many sides as there are to this complex individual, only one seems to have a stronghold. This winner they've been calling Dee-Ay-Go is clearly taking over. ■

Ted Bodenrader is THE RING's New England correspondent.

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Bantamweight Titleholder

Rafael Marquez

THIS BROTHER CAN BANG

By Ivan Goldman

Rafael Marquez isn't just Juan Manuel's little brother anymore. His one-punch kayo of the skilled, determined Heriberto Ruiz proved yet again that Rafael might be the hardest pound-for-pound puncher in the sport.

Lots of world-class fighters, given the perfect opportunity, can lay out an opponent with one punch. But as they move up in class, it gets harder and harder to create and seize that opportunity. Also, toward the top of the skills ladder, chins get more solid.

But as Rafael has moved up in class, the results have stayed the same—flattened opponents. He's also stopped Mark "Too Sharp" Johnson and Tim Austin, both supremely talented boxer-punchers. They just couldn't withstand Marquez' devastating power. In each case, after getting caught by Marquez, they looked like those victims in a horror movie who suddenly realize their tormentor is no ordinary mortal.

It's not as though Marquez' manager-trainer Ignacio Beristain has been seeking out tomato cans. The cumulative win-loss total of the IBF titlist's last five opponents was 127-12-7. And that's no statistical trick. His two outings before that were against Too Sharp, who was 40-1 (27) going into the first one, which ended in a split decision for Marquez. The paralyzing kayo was scored in the rematch.

Rafael, 29, and Juan Manuel, 31, whose record is 42-2-1 (33), have to be the most fearsome team of prize fighting brothers since junior lightweight

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Marquez watches Heriberto Ruiz hit the canvas headfirst after fielding a devastating right uppercut to the chin in the third round. It was the latest example of Marquez' freakish punching power, which is perhaps, pound-for-pound, the best in boxing.

PHOTOS BY CHRIS FARINA

One of the most impressive things about Marquez' punching prowess is that several of his victims have been potential Hall of Famers, such as previously unbeaten Tim Austin, who was knocked clean out of the ring (top), and Mark "Too Sharp" Johnson, who was twice beaten by Marquez, the second time via stunning eighth-round knockout (above).

Gabriel and lightweight Rafael Ruelas ruled their divisions nearly 10 years ago. Without denigrating the Ruelases, who gave fans plenty of electric moments, it seems pretty clear at this point that the Marquez brothers have surpassed them in almost every department. Compare the Marquezes to the heavyweight Klitschko brothers, and you're likely to reach the same conclusion.

The match against Ruiz, co-feature on Top Rank's junior lightweight shootout between Erik "El Terrible" Morales and Carlos "Famous" Hernandez, was a typical Rafael Marquez contest. His opponent, 29-2-2 (12) going in, was no pushover. He looked like he was doing okay until Marquez suddenly put his lights out.

In the third round, Marquez threw a wide left hook; Ruiz ducked under it and came back with a left hook to the body. But he was a split-second too slow in retrieving his glove. Marquez slipped in a wicked right uppercut, simultaneously pivoting his right foot to throw all his weight into it. This three-punch sequence took place in much less time than it takes to describe it. Even if you were watching carefully, you might not be sure you saw what you saw.

But everyone could spot the result. Ruiz toppled like a tree. Unconscious before he hit the canvas, he landed on his head and shoulder, unable even to stretch out an arm to break his fall. Referee Tony Weeks correctly called it over without a count at the 1:11 mark. Ruiz' team didn't argue.

Fortunately, a few moments later Ruiz could sit upright on a stool. Marquez, of Mexico City, immediately went over and consoled his countryman. Later, he told Top Rank publicist Ricardo Jimenez that he never landed a better punch. "He said he landed it at the perfect spot at the perfect time," Jimenez related.

Back in February 2003, also in Las Vegas, when Marquez caught Austin in the eighth round, the force of the blow powered the victim through the ropes onto the ring apron. Austin courageously rose in time to beat the count, but the punch had finished him. When the bout resumed, Marquez pounded him until referee Vic Drakulich stepped in.

Because they can't all face each other across their various weight classes, it's tough to prove which kayo artist throws the hardest pound-for-pound punch. Certainly Marquez, 32-3 (29), is on the list of top bangers. Among those with him are middleweight Ricardo Mayorga, welterweight Kermit Cintron, junior welters Kostya Tszyu and Arturo Gatti, junior bantam Alexander Munoz, featherweight Manny Pacquiao, lightweight Diego Corrales, and possibly middleweight Felix Trinidad. Another wicked puncher who might appear would be light heavyweight champion Antonio Tarver. Certainly if Roy Jones were to argue against Tarver's inclusion, he wouldn't have a leg to stand on.

Ironically, it's difficult to make a case for any of today's top heavyweights. Sluggers David Tua and Mike Tyson aren't what they used to be, and lacking divine intervention, they won't be again.

Had a list of kayo artists been assembled a couple of years ago, Marquez, Mayorga, Pacquiao, and Tarver might well have been overlooked. It's in the very nature of the sport for fighters to continually jostle for position, leapfrogging over one another. And there always are spectacular, unheralded bangers out there waiting to break into the public consciousness.

Just when some old wag complains fighters ain't what they used to be, a relatively unknown competitor such as Rafael Marquez comes forward to challenge that assertion with his fists.

But what a fighter proves in the ring doesn't always bring equivalent fame and fortune. Although hardcore fans understand bantamweight contests can be at least as exciting as those in any other division, the general public is not so easily convinced. Marquez-Ruiz was on a pay-per-view card because neither Showtime nor HBO would buy the fight.

"Fortunately, we have the resources to create and promote our own pay-per-view cards," said Top Rank publicist Lee Samuels. "The HBO dates are just loaded, and Showtime is down to one card a month (in addition to the network's lower-budget *ShoBox* series). Besides, they're already committed to a set of fighters. But we would love to do shows there."

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

It was a right uppercut similar to this one that finished Ruiz and allowed Marquez to tally his fourth successful defense of the IBF bantamweight title. Marquez could very well be the hardest hitting 118-pounder since Carlos Zarate.

Although it's never easy to tell how many fans at a Las Vegas venue were actually paying customers, more than 8,600 spectators watched Marquez-Ruiz at the MGM Grand. More of the card's allure can be attributed to the main event, but if Marquez keeps laying out his opponents, he just has to attract more attention.

Rafael's featherweight big brother also toiled in relative obscurity for years. But as Top Rank chieftain Bob Arum points out, many casual fans have learned to appreciate featherweights. Bantams, though only eight pounds south, are a tougher sell.

Top Rank Executive Vice President Todd duBoef told The RING he believes that Rafael might eventually go all the way to featherweight. He's been a bantam since turning pro in September 1995. His ability to maintain the weight indicates a powerful work ethic. Credit must also

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Two-division former titlist Mauricio Pastrana, pictured absorbing a huge left hook, is one of the few Marquez opponents to last the distance. The October 2003 bout in Los Angeles resulted in a 12-round unanimous decision victory for Marquez.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

The usually poker-faced Marquez allows himself a big smile after icing Ruiz. As THE RING's number-one bantamweight contender, he could win a world title by beating either Veerapol Sahaprom or Johnny Bredahl, but neither alphabet beltholder is a major attraction in the United States.

go to Beristain and his demanding training methods. The Marquez brothers were both trained by their father as amateurs. When it was time to turn pro, he took them to Beristain, a family friend. Chief trainer to retired greats Chiquita Gonzalez and Ricardo "Finito" Lopez, Beristain is also former coach of Mexico's national amateur team.

"He actually is a Mexican Eddie Futch," contends longtime California matchmaker Jerry Bilderrain. "Beristain's very, very sharp, just like Eddie was, and he's very similar in his approach."

Says Jimenez, "Nacho is one of those trainers who really believes in sound technique. He doesn't turn out brawlers. Also, he trains his guys as close to the weight as he can. After a fight, they get a week or two off. That's it. Then they're right back in the gym. If you're not a very disciplined fighter, it's not likely you will be with Nacho for long."

When Rafael turned pro, although he had natural power, "he was always a little awkward," Jimenez said. "He developed technically in the last couple years. Now he knows how to land a punch, not just how to throw it."

Clearly a fighter with Rafael's explosiveness brings excitement to any contest. But at times he spends too much time looking for an opening and not enough time throwing shots. In his match with Ruiz, the first two rounds contained little action, which prompted some jeering.

"Both guys were doing the same thing, just getting the feel of each other," said Bilderrain. "That was the reason for the slow motion." Then in round three, all hell broke loose.

Against Austin, Marquez waited until the seventh round to put on the pressure. Jimenez said this resulted from a miscommunication. In the corner, Beristain had advised him to take his time, and Marquez thought he must wait for his trainer to change signals.

"Finally, before the seventh round," Jimenez said, "Rafael asked Nacho, 'Can I go for it now?' That's when they got excited. 'Yeah, go for it,' they said. Rafael wanted to make sure he was obeying instructions."

Marquez' team says their fighter still makes 118 with little trouble, but they understand the business end of boxing may require him to go up a division or so. Top Rank, duBoef said, is also looking at possible title unification. But it's not certain how much excitement would be raised by bouts with WBA titlist Johnny Bredahl or the WBC's Veerapol Sahaprom. Challenging junior featherers Oscar Larios, Israel Vazquez, or perhaps Joan Guzman might hold more financial promise.

Whichever direction the matchmaking goes, Marquez will take his monster punch with him. That's bad news for opponents, but good news for fans. ■

Ivan Goldman is THE RING's West Coast correspondent.

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SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Hasim Rahman KO 2 Terrance Lewis
Danny Williams KO 4 Mike Tyson
Dominick Guinn KO 1 Phil Jackson
Lance Whitaker KO 1 Otis Tisdale
Samuel Peter W 10 Jovo Pudar
Sinan Samil Sam KO 1 Doug Liggion
Oleg Maskaev W 10 David Defiagbon
Larry Donald KO 3 Mario Cawley
Luan Krasniqi KO 7 Rene Monse
Nicolay Valuev KO 6 Richard Bango
Calvin Brock W 6 Willie Williams
Ruslan Chagaev KO 5 Garing Lane
Malik Scott KO 1 Drexie Frank James
Brian Minto KO 10 Vinny Maddalone
Alexander Dimitrenko W 8 Julius Francis
Konstantic Onofrei KO 9 Goran Gogic
Nathan Briggs KO 6 Jiro Ichikawa
Paolo Vidoz KO 2 Tamer Mourad
Taras Bidenko KO 1 Daniel Frank
Timor Ibragimov KO 2 Earl Ladson
Butterbean KO 1 Sal Farnetti

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Pietro Aurino W 10 Ramdane Serdjane
Felix Cora Jr. W 12 Jermell Barnes
Charles Davis W 10 Arthur Williams
Laudelino Barros KO 3 Carlos Balduino
Rayco Saunders W 10 James Walton
Chad Van Sickle W 10 Luke Munsen
Firat Arslan W 10 Manuel Lee Ossie

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Omar Sheika W 10 James Butler
David Telesco KO 2 Manu Ntoh
George Jones D 10 Darnell Wilson
Prince Badi Ajamu KO 10 Fred Moore
Norman Jones KO 8 Rico Cason
Sam Reese W 8 Aneudi Santos
Victor Paz W 4 Michael Gutrick

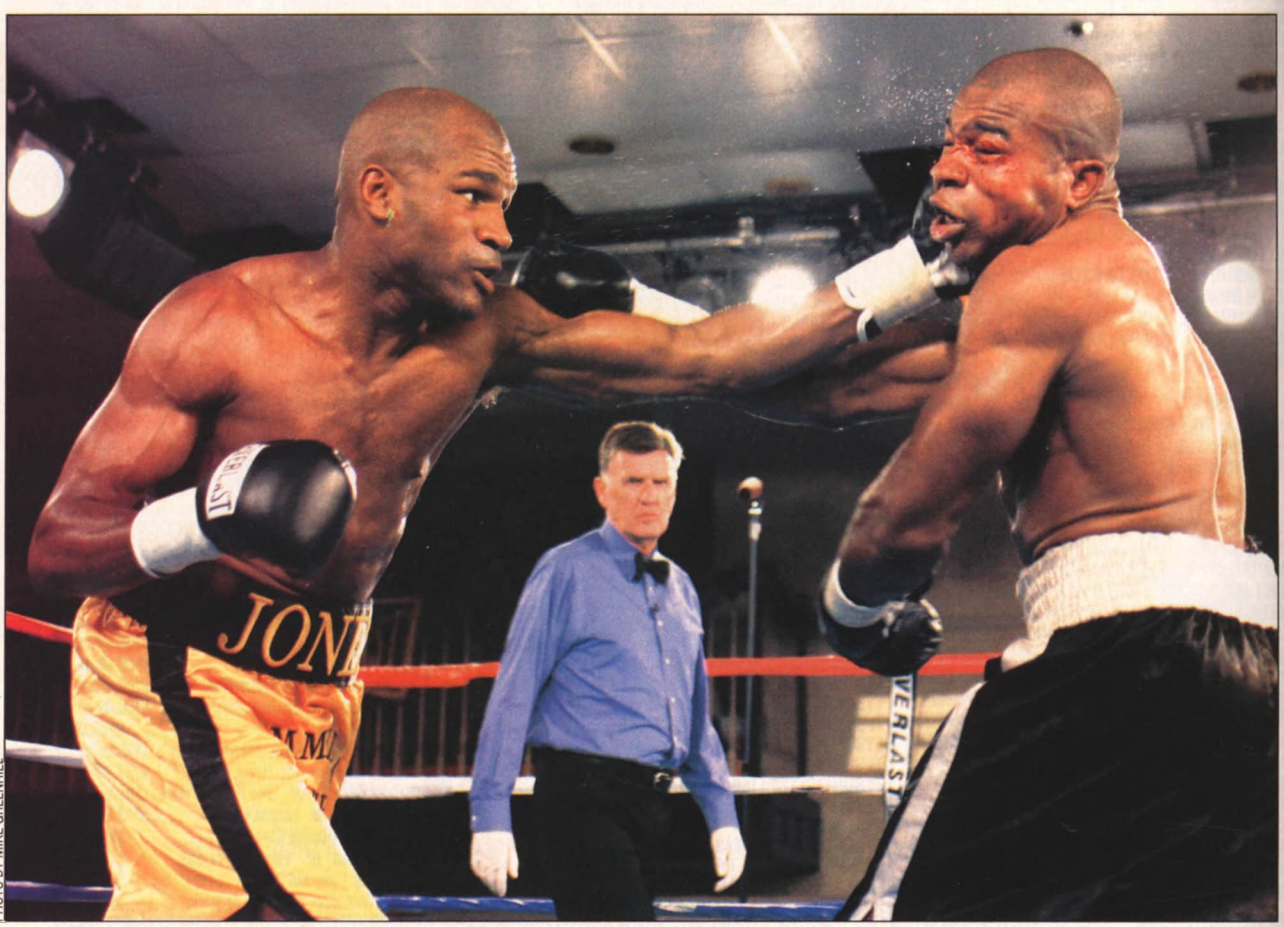

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Light heavyweight George Jones blasts Darnell Wilson with a left

Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. rips Jason Smith in the nose with an uppercut

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Rudy Markussen W 12 Danilo Haussler
Mger Mkrtchian KO 2 Branko Sobot
Quentin Smith KO 1 Mike Jackson
Dennis Sharpe D 4 Patrick Thompson
Ronald Hearns W 4 Billy Johnson
Laila Ali KO 9 Monica Nunez

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

David Lopez W 12 Kirino Garcia
Randy Griffin KO 10 Julio Garcia
Tarvis Simms KO 2 Eric Howard
Robert Frazier D 8 Marcos Primera
Christophe Tendil KO 8 Miro Kvocka
Sebastian Sylvester KO 7 Dirk Dzemski

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Emmett Linton W 10 Dorian Beaupierre
Mihaly Kotai KO 8 Floyd Trumpet
Jose Luis Cruz KO 3 Dario Esalas
Tshepo Mashego KO 4 Farai Kachigwada
Marco Antonio Rubio KO 7 Jeffrey Hill
Ishmail Arvin W 8 Elco Garcia
Bobby Joe Valdez KO 4 Fray Luis Sierra
Yuri Foreman W 6 Joshua Onyango

WELTERWEIGHTS

Sharmba Mitchell KO 2 Moises Pedroza
Jesse James Leija W 10 Francisco Bojado
Vince Phillips KO 6 Paulino Avitia
Joseph Makaringe KO 3 Avhashoni Mbedzi
Joshua Clottey KO 3 Christopher Henry
Mustapha Bouzid W 12 Michele Orlando
Rev Santillan W 12 Taisei Marumoto
Mike Arnaoutis D 12 Juan Urango
Manning Galloway W 8 Said Ouali
Norberto Bravo W 10 Gustavo Corral
Darien Ford W 6 Charles Murray
Nick Casal KO 1 Lance Leggett

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Arturo Gatti KO 2 Leonard Dorin
Javier Jauregui W 10 James Crayton
Gianluca Branco KO 2 Laszlo Herczeg
Jose Miguel Cotto W 10 Alfred Kotey
Rolando Reyes W 8 Omar Bernal
Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. W 4 Jason Smith

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Diego Corrales KO 10 Acelino Freitas
Robbie Peden W 8 Armando Cordoba
Efren Hinojosa W 10
Jose Luis Soto-Karass
Billy Irwin KO 9 Lou Bizzarro
Graham Earl KO 6 Steve Murray
Edner Cherry KO 5 Antonio Ramirez
Ricky Quiles W 10 Jose Quintana
Raymundo Gonzalez D 12 Luis Arceo

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Erik Morales W 12 Carlos Hernandez
(Wins IBF Title; Retains WBC Title)
Yodsanan Nanthachai W 12 Steve Forbes
(Retains WBA Title)
Manuel Medina KO 3 Leonardo Resendiz
Nate Campbell W Disq. 4 Tiger Martinez
Guty Espadas KO 10 Ramon Perez
Anthony Tshehla W 12 Misheck Kondwani

FEATHERWEIGHTS

In Jin Chi KO 10 Eiichi Sugama
(Retains WBC Title)
Jose Aguiniga W 10 Cristobal Cruz
Takashi Koshimoto W 12 Seung-Kon Chae
Akihiro Kanai KO 8 Toshinobu Nakatani
Fahprakorb Rakkiatgym KO 7
Dondon Lapuz
Domenico Urbano Tech. Win 9
Manuel Calvo

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Gabriel Elizondo KO 4 Terrence Roy

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Rafael Marquez KO 3 Heriberto Ruiz
(Retains IBF Title)
Silence Mabuza KO 5 Noel Wilders
Eiji Kojima KO 5 Klongchai Sor Visetkit
Vusi Malinga W 12 Siyabonga Nyanga

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Hawk Makepula KO 6 Zanomzi Xola
Nobua Nashiro W 10 Hidenobu Honda
Pramuansak Phosuwan KO 1
Zugura Jamazudi

FLYWEIGHTS

Alex Sanchez W 8 Roberto Gomez
Monelisi Myekeni W 8
Mlungiseleli Xokoloshe
Luis Lazarte KO 3 German Amado

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Nelson Dieppa W 12 Ulises Solis
Nerys Espinoza KO 5 Javier Tello
Shingo Yamaguchi W 12 Bert Batawang

STRAWWEIGHTS

Ivan Calderon W 12 Roberto Leyva
Makoto Suzuki KO 5 Namchai Taksinisan

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The RING

FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

In a month in which there were a number of strong candidates, Diego Corrales edged out junior welterweight Arturo Gatti and heavyweight Danny Williams to take top honors. In many other months, Williams' upset kayo of Mike Tyson or Gatti's one-punch knockout of the previously undefeated Leonard Dorin would have been more than enough to win. But Corrales' TKO of Acelino Freitas trumped the remarkable accomplishments of Williams and Gatti due to "Popo's" superior credentials.

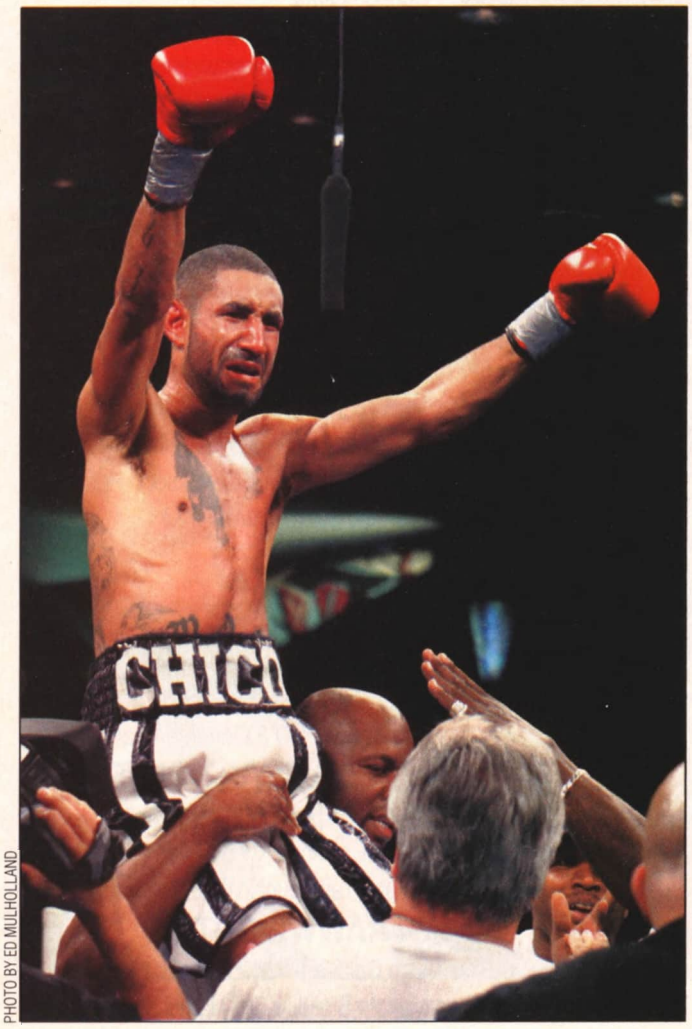

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

For the first seven rounds, it looked like Freitas would leg his way to a victory over the stalking but considerably slower Corrales. The Brazilian stayed several steps ahead of "Chico" and built up a sizable lead on the scorecards. But Corrales never gave up and kept pressing forward, gradually closing the gap as Freitas' frantic movement and the occasional heavy blow that found the mark gradually slowed him down.

The eighth was the beginning of the end for Freitas. Corrales trapped him on the ropes and dropped him with a flush right hand to the jaw. Another right floored Freitas again in the ninth, and in the 10th, a final right from Corrales, which landed on Freitas' ear, bowled him over for a third time. Freitas beat the count and looked clear-eyed, but after taking two steps toward the referee, he changed his mind, waved his glove, and quit.

The emphatic victory not only made Corrales Fighter of the Month, it also earned him the number-one spot in THE RING's lightweight rankings.

• • • •

Diego Corrales

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Erik Morales W 12 Carlos Hernandez

Las Vegas, Nevada: Boxing fans always get their money's worth when Morales steps into the ring, and when he took on Hernandez, they got more than they expected, as both fighters fought fast for 12 rounds en route to Morales pulling out a unanimous decision. Morales, 130, Tijuana, Mexico, said, "I knew Carlos is a guy in front, throwing punches. It was difficult to keep him away. We fought mostly on the inside." With the win, Morales notched his first defense of the WBC super featherweight title, and added the IBF belt (Hernandez was making his first defense).

The alphabet unification bout started with both fighters trading blows, landing hard on each other's head and body, but Morales was landing the more significant punches. Morales, 47-1 (34), landed a good right uppercut followed by a straight right hand, snapping back the head of Hernandez, 40-4-1 (24). As early as the first round, the 8,611 fans at the MGM Grand Garden Arena were on their feet and cheering wildly.

The 27-year-old Morales' best weapon was a double right hand that he threw regularly while on the back foot, followed by an uppercut with the same hand that landed accurately almost every time. But to the 33-year-old Hernandez' credit, he took everything the three-division titlist threw. Hernandez, 130, West Covina, California, via El Salvador, always came straight back with good left hooks to Morales' head and body.

The fight grew more competitive in the later rounds, but the tiring Morales was still picking his shots and stealing the rounds. With both fighters exhausted, they hugged in the center of the ring to start the 12th. Again, they got a well-deserved standing ovation from the excited crowd. Throughout the final round, each fighter kept his arms churning and did not stop until the bell rang.

Morales—cut on his left eye in the fourth by a headbutt, then again in the 11th on his right eye by a punch—ended the fight with his face looking like it had been a demanding battle. Referee Vic Drakulich (USA) did not have much work to do to keep the fight under control.

Judges Jerry Roth (USA) and Steve Epstein (USA) scored the contest 119-109, and Nobuaki Uratani (Japan) saw it 115-113, all for Morales. THE RING scored the fight 117-111 for Morales.

Hernandez started the press conference in tears saying, "This was an opportunity of a lifetime for me. I am disappointed. I hope I proved that I have a big heart and I can bang with anyone. I don't go down."

Bob Arum, Morales' promoter, said "El Terrible's" next bout could be a pay-per-view extravaganza in November in Las Vegas.

Television: Pay-per-view

Promoter: Top Rank

(7-31-04)

Wayne McCullough

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Morales blasts gritty Hernandez with a right

Ivan Calderon W 12 Roberta Leyva

Las Vegas, Nevada: Reminding us that fighters in boxing's smallest division can come up big, "Iron Boy" Calderon, Bayamon, Puerto Rico, and Leyva, Puerto Penasco, Mexico, put on a tremendous display of boxing and in-close fighting for 12 hard rounds, with the unbeaten Calderon pulling out a unanimous decision. It was a more competitive fight than most expected, as Leyva was a heavy underdog after losing by third-round knockout in two of his previous four fights. The fight opened the Morales-Hernandez pay-per-view at the MGM Grand Garden Arena.

In the first round, a clash of heads almost ended the fight with only about 30 seconds gone, as Calderon's left eye started to bleed. However, they continued to fight on.

The early rounds were close, with Leyva, 105, pushing the slicker Calderon, 104½, onto the back foot. It was obvious that Leyva, 24, had started fast to try make Calderon, 29, tire. Leyva had success in the second round with a good right to Calderon's body, but the bell sounded before the Mexican could follow up.

Calderon, one of the smartest counterpunchers in the business, got stronger and more relaxed in the second half of the fight, as he continued to land his southpaw right jab accurately. Calderon started moving left and right, making fellow southpaw Leyva swing and miss with his wild shots. Calderon would then counter back with straight left hands and right hooks to the Mexican's head.

A low blow in the eighth by Calderon gave referee Robert Byrd (USA) one of his few tasks of the evening, as he paused the fight to give Leyva a chance to recover. Otherwise, it was an extremely clean fight.

In the final three minutes, Calderon gave a tremendous display of accurate boxing, catching the tired Leyva, 23-4-1 (20), with clean punches as the underdog moved forward. It was a competitive fight, but Calderon had separated himself as the clear winner, earning unanimous scores of 116-112 from judges Chuck Giampa (USA), Robert Hoyle (USA), and Michael Pernick (USA). THE RING also scored the fight 116-112 for Calderon.

The partisan Leyva crowd showed their displeasure at the decision, but the right fighter got it. Calderon, 20-0 (4), showed that he was the sharper boxer of the two and won the majority of the rounds, even if his performance was not as dominating as was expected from one of the top fighters in the strawweight division.

Promoter: Top Rank

(7-31-04)

Wayne McCullough

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Slick Calderon angles a right to Leyva's body

Injin Chi KO 10 Eiichi Sugama

Seoul, Korea: It's not very often that you see WBC featherweight titlist Chi looking groggy and in danger of being knocked out, but that's exactly the situation he was in for a scary stretch in the seventh round of his title defense against game Japanese challenger Sugama. But aside from that round, Chi, 126, controlled his hard-fought battle with Sugama, 126, and scored two knockdowns before referee Malcolm Bulner (Australia) declared a halt at 1:03 of the 10th round at the Millennium Hall.

The 30-year-old Chi, making his first defense since acquiring the vacant belt with a seventh-round demolition of Michael Brodie in Manchester in April, got off to a good start with an aggressive attack in the first round. The Korean was also in command in the second, throwing many jabs and combinations. In the third, Chi maintained his aggressiveness, but Sugama, 28, occasionally caught him with sharp and accurate left hooks and right crosses to arguably win the round.

Chi wasn't as fast and sharp as in the Brodie fight, probably because of his underestimation of the Japanese challenger. But Chi kept a high work rate anyway and won the fourth and fifth rounds with busy combos upstairs and down. The fifth became a 10-8 round when Sugama was penalized for a low blow.

The fight suddenly took a turn at the end of the sixth, when Sugama caught Chi with a solid left-right combo to the chin just as the bell sounded. Chi went down, but ref Bulner didn't count, ruling that the punches were thrown after the bell. Chi returned to his corner in a daze, and came out for the seventh still in obvious trouble. Chi absorbed Sugama's best shots, mostly right uppercuts and right crosses, and was so rubbery legged that Bulner later said, "I thought Chi was going to be knocked out in that round." But the titleholder survived.

The momentum swung back dramatically in the eighth. The determined Chi willingly mixed it up with the arm-weary Sugama, and took over with a fusillade of punches that made the challenger retreat. The ninth round featured more of the same, and in the 10th, Chi swarmed over his fading foe with a barrage of punches, ending with a wicked right uppercut that dropped him hard. Sugama barely managed to raise himself to resume fighting, only to hit the deck again when Chi furiously followed up. Sugama, 26-4-1 (19), collapsed and was counted out.

Chi, 29-2-1 (18), apparently wasn't in tip-top shape, as he was slower than usual and his punches lacked snap and sharpness. But he displayed his heart in overcoming the critical moments in the seventh, and finally carried himself to a well-received victory. Kusung Lee, his promoter, said, "Chi might have been overconfident and lacked the necessary discipline. But he finally overpowered the big-hearted challenger."

Promoter: Poongsan Promotion

(7-24-04)

Joe Koizumi

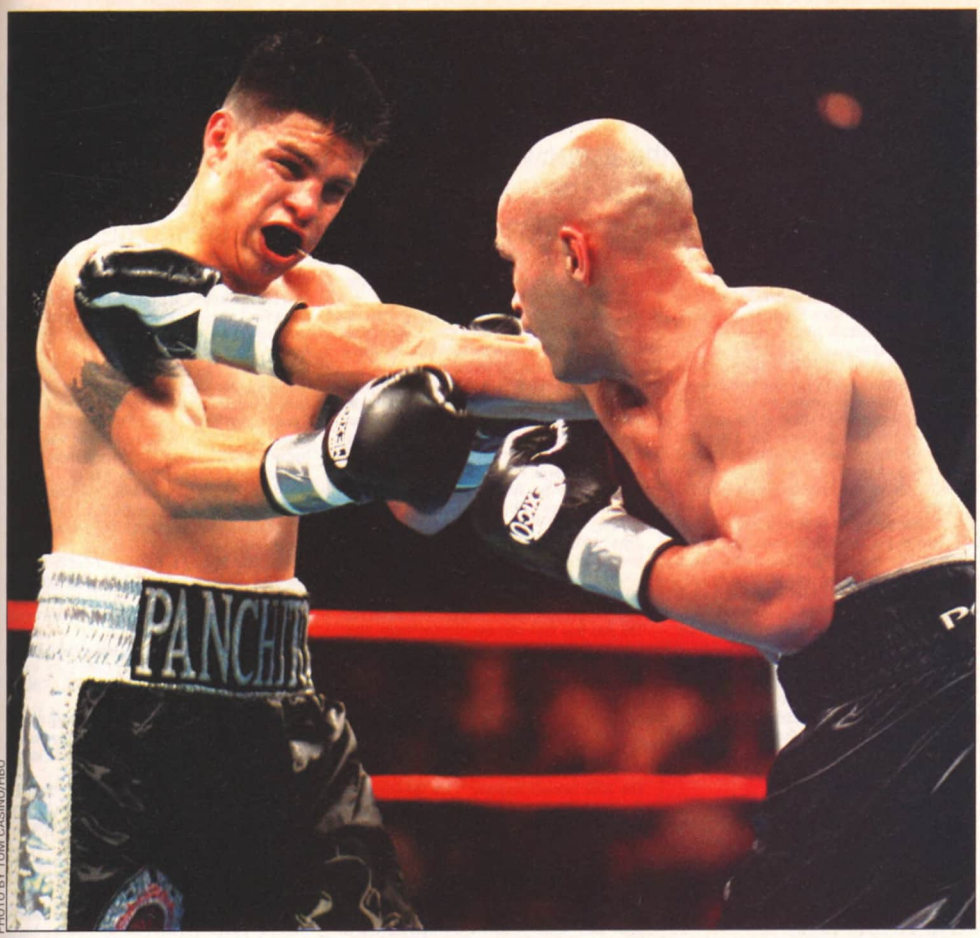

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

Bojado had no response for Leija's right hand

Jesse James Leija W 10 Francisco Bojado

Atlantic City, New Jersey: You can baby a prospect only so long, especially if you want him to fight on HBO for the sort of money that can help recoup the costly investment promoter Main Events and manager Shelly Finkel have made in Bojado. Leija seemed like the perfect next step, a popular former titleholder who, at age 38, appeared just one punishing defeat away from retirement. But after 10 rounds of brisk action in the chief supporting bout on the Arturo Gatti-Leonard Dorin card at Boardwalk Hall, it was Leija who walked away the winner, while Bojado and his team were left to wonder what went wrong.

Well, to start with, Leija obviously wasn't as far down the slippery slope as many had thought. True, the battle-scarred Texan is past his best, but he's still capable of giving almost anybody in the junior welterweight class a demanding fight.

Leija, 142¼, knew that Bojado, 142, couldn't fight effectively backing up, and made pressure his first priority. He trundled forward in the opening round, jabbing accurately and occasionally following with right hands to win the session on all three official scorecards.

It was the second round, however, that proved to be the pivotal point of the match. Ironically, it was Bojado's biggest round. He floored Leija with a whistling left hook to the head, but when the veteran beat referee Earl Morton's count and survived "Panchito's" follow-up, the momentum shifted to Leija.

Apparently fully recovered from the drubbing he'd taken in the second, Leija picked up in the third right where he'd left off before hitting the deck, snapping stinging rights into Bojado's face. It was more of the same in the fourth as Leija scored well to the body early, and then came upstairs with additional rights.

For long stretches, the 21-year-old Bojado, billed out of East Los Angeles, was strangely passive. Had he launched an all-out assault he might very well have overwhelmed Leija with his superior punching power. But he either lacked the confidence to do so, or was too worried about his foxy foe's counters to risk it.

Leija also swept the sixth on all three cards, and then really cut loose in the seventh. For a prolonged period, Bojado, his back to the ropes, looked like a fly stuck in a spider's web, as Leija unloaded a hellish barrage of blows upstairs and down. Bojado sagged and flinched, but gamely stayed upright, finally extricating himself from the ropes and connecting with booming left hook shortly before the bell.

Bojado moved more in the eighth and enjoyed moderate success, in part because Leija, who was by then sporting a large lump on his forehead, was recharging following his all-out effort to finish the younger man in the previous round. Panchito tried to keep his mini-rally going in the ninth, but his punches didn't have much snap by that point, and Leija continued to score with rights.

Both men unleashed whatever they had left in the 10th, providing fans with a vigorous finish to a pleasing bout. Both scored well, but Leija surged ahead in the final minute behind his trusty right hand, putting an exclamation mark on his best performance in several years.

Judge Luis Rivera almost spoiled what had been a very good fight by scoring it 95-94 for Bojado. Fortunately, John Stewart and George Hill were more perceptive, and voted for Leija by scores of 96-93 and 95-94, respectively. THE RING had Leija up 97-92.

The rejuvenated Leija, 47-6-2 (19) with 1 no-contest, wants a shot at Gatti, but will have to look elsewhere if Gatti takes on Floyd Mayweather next. As far as Bojado, 16-2 (11), is concerned, it's beginning to look like he's one of those prospects who looked sensational bowling over modest opposition during his early career buildup, but just can't seem to get over the hump when he steps up to world-class opposition.

Television: HBO

Promoter: Main Events in association with Bally's & Caesars

(7-24-04)

Nigel Collins ■

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New Face

(Continued from page 24)

kid with an uppercut. The same kid later returned with some friends and a gun.

"My father pulled up and these guys got scared and they didn't bother him or me," Green recalled. "These guys had a gun and my father still walked straight up to them. I'd do the same. I'm a 'rude boy.' That's just a saying. But that comes from the inner, deep, dark depths of my soul."

The time spent on the streets was a true educational experience for Green. Because of it, he calls himself the oldest 24-year-old on earth. Green was alone, as he is in the ring when he's fighting, depending on no one but himself.

"I was staying where I could, basically living on the streets," Green said. "Through all of that hardship, I went to the gym every day. I never missed a day at the gym in my life, ever. A lot of it was just me being young; I did a lot of things being young. I wasn't a gang member or anything. But for me, it was about eating and surviving. I made sure I went to the gym every day and I made sure I went to school every day. I had to lean on myself. The only person you can trust is you. You have to trust you and you're the only person you have."

Scott Burnett has known Green since 1996 and has been Green's trainer for the last two years. Green doesn't like to talk much about his hardscrabble past, and, according to Burnett, he might have had a much tougher road than he's willing to let on.

But Green's harnessed the frustration of poverty to create the foundation of a granite-willed work ethic. He's a student of the art. That enables him to quickly identify opponents' tendencies he can exploit. Boxing is a 24-hour-a-day job for Green. He never stops thinking about boxing.

"I never met a fighter who does everything Allan does," Burnett said. "He studies an hour of tape a day, and he studies everyone, old fighters and new fighters. I'll call him early in the day and he'll be watching Cleveland Williams and Muhammad Ali fight, or be watching a Sugar Ray Leonard fight. He admires the guys from the old days, the hardcore, gritty guys who had to fight to eat. He thinks the guys today are lazy, because Allan never stops training. Allan is a very likable guy who is a little hard and callous. He never really lets his guard down, in or out of the ring."

And Green's not afraid of who he may have to climb over to reach boxing stardom.

"My father came up basically the same way as I did; I love boxing and I have unbelievable ambitions," Green said. "Roy Jones, Antonio Tarver, anyone in the top 10, I'll kick their ass.

"You know why I say that? Because I have balls, and balls makes you go get it. I'm not afraid of anything. You shouldn't be afraid of anything that's going to happen to you. At heart, I'm a fighter.

"These guys today complain about running a mile. But I prepare. I look at everyone. I watch at least four or five fights a day. You should. It's like going to school. It is my life. I'd fight for free, if I had to, and that's no b.s. I'm a warrior. I'm not an athlete, either. I'm a gladiator. That's because gladiators know how to fight. Not all athletes know how to fight."

In an ideal world, Green would fight once a week, or at the very least, once every few weeks. But as of press time for this magazine, his promoter, Sugar Ray Leonard, was involved in an internal squabble with his company, leaving fighters like Green wondering what the next step could be. As of press time, Green was also trying to break free from his manager, Don Jackson, as well.

When in the ring, however, there's no disputing boxer-puncher Green's talent. The only flaw Burnett would like to address is Green's tendency to war when unnecessary.

"I'd like to see Allan improve his jab more, if that's possible, and improve his patience," Burnett said. "He is using combinations more effectively and, at this stage, we want to make sure that Allan gets rounds in. He's on time. He's only 24 and he's still young, but maturity wise, he's a 50-year-old in a 24-year-old's body. He's very mature. You see it in the ring. When he doesn't get a guy out real quick, Allan deals with that real well."

Besides boxing, Green has two other serious responsibilities, four-year-old daughter Najiyyah and two-year-old son Diayaan, both of whom Green has custody of. Green takes them everywhere, even the gym.

"I got my babies and they're important to me," Green said. "They keep me going. But so does this boxing business. Hopefully, I see myself being the light heavyweight champion of the world for a long, long time. I want to change boxing, and hopefully when I retire, I can establish a money scale for fighters.

"I know where I am. I'm a blue-collar fighter, but I'm not even blue-collar, I'm green-collar. Boxing is a personal thing. The people that run this business don't realize that. I'm an anachronism, a throwback. I'd like to fight every week, if it was up to me. I'm Sugar Ray Robinson reincarnated." ■

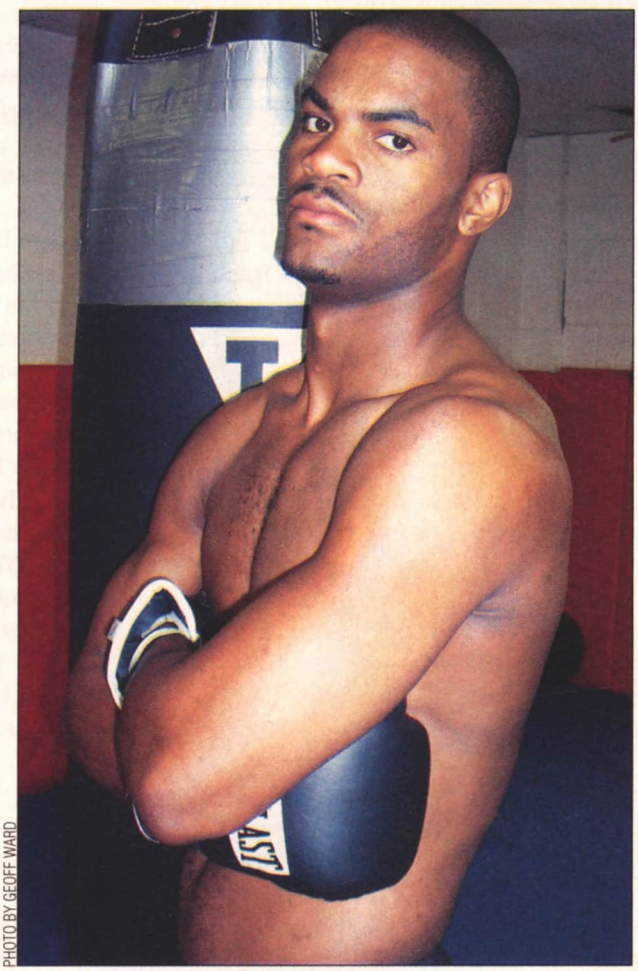


PHOTO BY GEOFF WARD

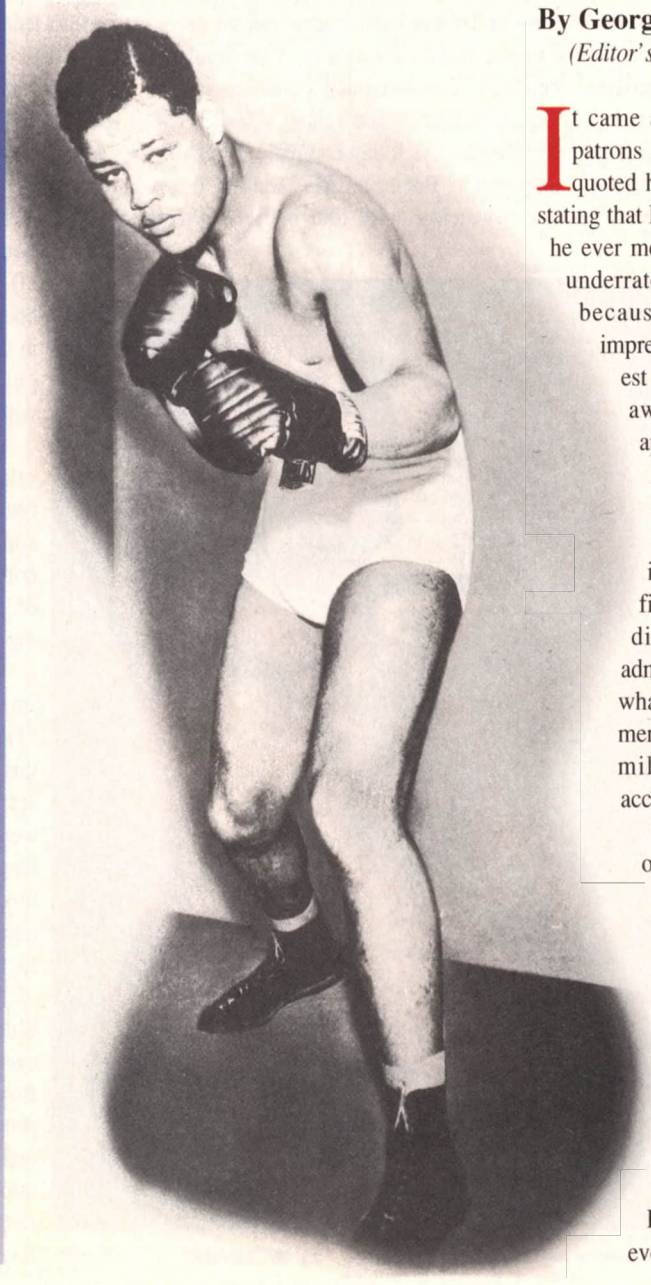
Green's a "gladiator," not an "athlete"

CLASSIC

From THE RING, September 1944

TOUGHEST FOE OF LOUIS

Heavyweight king's selection of Max Baer as opponent who was hardest to beat astonished many experts who saw Joe stop him in four rounds—former fistic stars frequently differed with their public regarding abilities of men they defeated in the ring



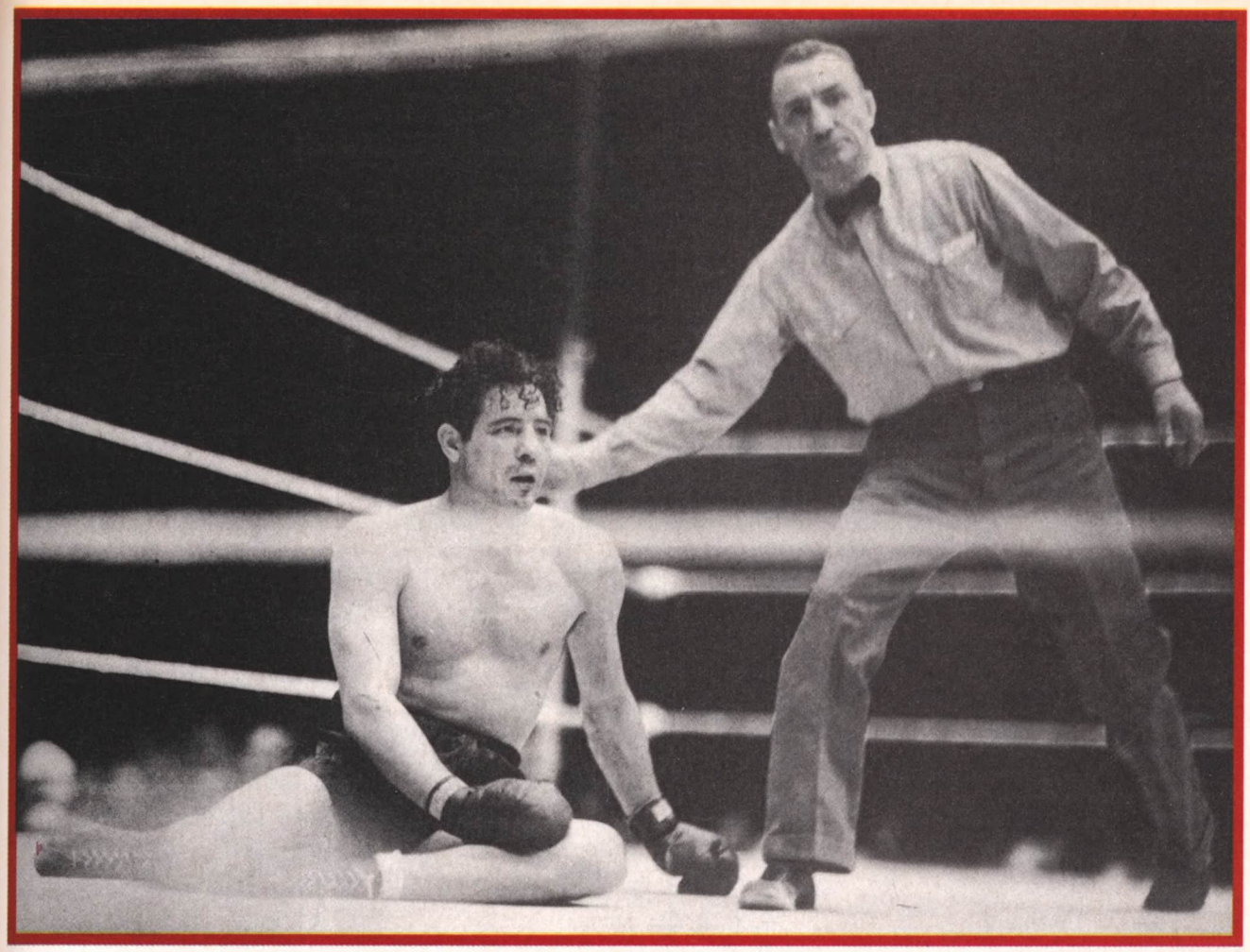
By George T. Tickell

(Editor's Note: This is a condensed version.)

It came as a distinct surprise to most ring patrons here when a London news dispatch quoted heavyweight champion Joe Louis as stating that Max Baer was the toughest opponent he ever met. Not that anyone was disposed to underrate Baer's scrapping efficiency, but because that particular battle had not impressed the fans as one of Baer's happiest efforts by a long shot. Louis put him away in the fourth frame and didn't appear to have much trouble doing so.

Still, Staff Sergeant Joe Louis of the United States Army, whose numerous boxing exhibitions, given in the English metropolis for the edification of British and American soldiers, has won him a host of new admirers, is surely in a position to know what relative degrees of toughness the men he whipped possessed. He did the milling, and his opinions must be accorded due respect.

Yet, while those outside a ring can only guess how the principals inside the enclosure are exactly feeling with regard to the biffing business, it's a cinch that among the spectators at the Louis-Baer match on September 24, 1935, there were many who had watched both men perform against other fighters. And you'd have had a hard time finding one of these who didn't think Baer was way off color on that eventful occasion.



Joe Louis threw a minor tremor at the boxing world when he said that Max Baer was the toughest opponent he had ever faced, despite vanquishing Baer in four rounds in 1935. To the outside observer, it seemed an easy outing for "The Brown Bomber."

Unquestionably, Baer started to slip before he tackled Louis. He lost the heavyweight title to James Braddock a few months before that. Prior to the Braddock affair, Eddie Simms gave him a pretty bad messing up at Cleveland, a bout from which the then-champion emerged with cut lips and a beautiful black eye.

That was the handwriting on the wall as regarded Baer's future, although very few boxing critics saw it that way and most of them tipped him to whip Braddock. But the latter left-handed him all over the ring in 15 rounds, winning by a large margin of points. The loser paid the penalty for too many enjoyable hours spent on the pleasure trail, combined with a dislike for the training routine.

The betting odds favored Louis over Baer, which was nothing to wonder at under the circumstances, and turned out to be absolutely correct. It was afterward rumored that Baer suffered an attack of "nerves" in his dressing room and had entered the ring feeling that he was doomed to defeat. If such was the case, it didn't prevent him from standing up to Louis and taking all "The Brown Bomber" could give, without flinching.

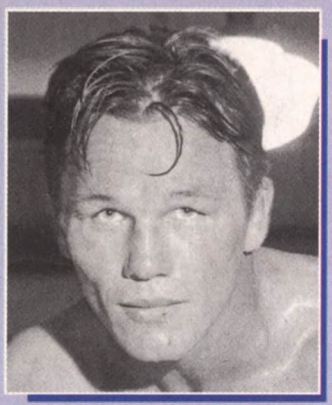
True, there was not a moment when he looked like a winner, but he at least deserved credit for throwing punches without stint so long as he had a punch left in him. He went down for the count in the fourth frame, and there was no barney about that. Why so many newspapers saw fit to assert that he quit remains a mystery. Nat Fleischer, editor of THE RING Magazine, saw the finish from a quite different angle, and gave full praise to Baer for gallantry and gameness in his account of the contest. It now appears that Louis had a similar viewpoint.

It is an oft-quoted literary maxim that "no author is the best judge of his own work," and it has frequently been demonstrated that fighters are in a like position. One would naturally fancy that champion Louis would list his one disastrous battle—that with Max Schmeling on June 19, 1936, when the German won in 12 rounds—the toughest of his career.

That was amply avenged in 1938, when Louis fairly smothered Schmeling in less than a round, battering the latter so viciously that Schmeling had to be taken to a hospital when the fray was over. But those who witnessed the first Schmeling-Louis combat will assuredly agree that if Louis didn't think it was a super-tough road he traveled then, the Brown Bomber is surely hard to satisfy in that respect.

But fighters have often disagreed with the sport-public's verdicts as to the merits of the men they met in the ring. John L. Sullivan awarded the palm to Jake Kilrain as the most formidable of his opponents. It took the "Boston Strong Boy" 75 rounds, fighting with the bare fists under London Rules, to stop Kilrain. They were in the ring two hours, 16 minutes, and 23 seconds. So Sullivan had good grounds

THE RING RATINGS, September 1944



Tony Zale

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Joe Louis
1. Lee Q. Murray
2. Joe Baksi
3. Melio Bettina
4. Curtis Sheppard
5. Joey Maxim
6. Lee Oma
7. Tami Mauriello
8. Lou Nova
9. Turkey Thompson
10. Lee Savold

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Gus Lesnevich
1. Lloyd Marshall
2. Freddie Mills
3. Jack McNamee
4. Jack Johnson
5. Fitzie Fitzpatrick
6. Tiger Jack Fox
7. Bob Garner
8. Billy Grant
9. Bruce Woodcock
10. Tommy Yarosz

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Tony Zale
1. Holman Williams
2. Charley Burley
3. Joe Carter
4. Jake LaMotta
5. Joe Reddick
6. Coley Welch
7. Jose Basora
8. Al Tribuani
9. Vince Hawkins
10. Vic Dellicurti

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Freddie Cochrane
1. Tippy Larkin
2. Arthur Danahar
3. Tommy Bell
4. Henry Armstrong
5. Sammy Angott
6. Al Costa
7. Frankie Wills
8. Aaron Perry
9. Rocky Graziano
10. Harold Green

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. Bob Montgomery
2. Beau Jack
3. John Thomas
4. Juan Zurita
5. Ike Williams
6. Lulu Costantino
7. Willie Joyce
8. Freddie Dawson
9. Cleo Shans
10. Dave Castiloux

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Willie Pep
1. Chalky Wright
2. Sal Bartolo
3. Charley Cabey Lewis
4. Carlos Chavez
5. Pedro Hernandez
6. Al Phillips
7. Phil Terranova
8. Enrique Bolanos
9. Willie Roache
10. Harry Jeffra

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Manuel Ortiz
1. Tony Olivera
2. Rush Dalma
3. Sam Reynolds
4. David Kui Kong Young
5. Benny Goldberg
6. Luis Castillo
7. Ceferino Robleto
8. Ronnie Clayton
9. Joey Puig
10. Florian Bibeau

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Jackie Paterson
1. Norman Lewis
2. Dado Marino
3. Alec Murphy
4. Joe Curran
5. Larry Torpey
6. Hugh Cameron
7. Terry Allen
8. Stumpy Buttwell
9. Johnny Summers
10. Tommy Plowright

for considering Kilrain bad medicine.

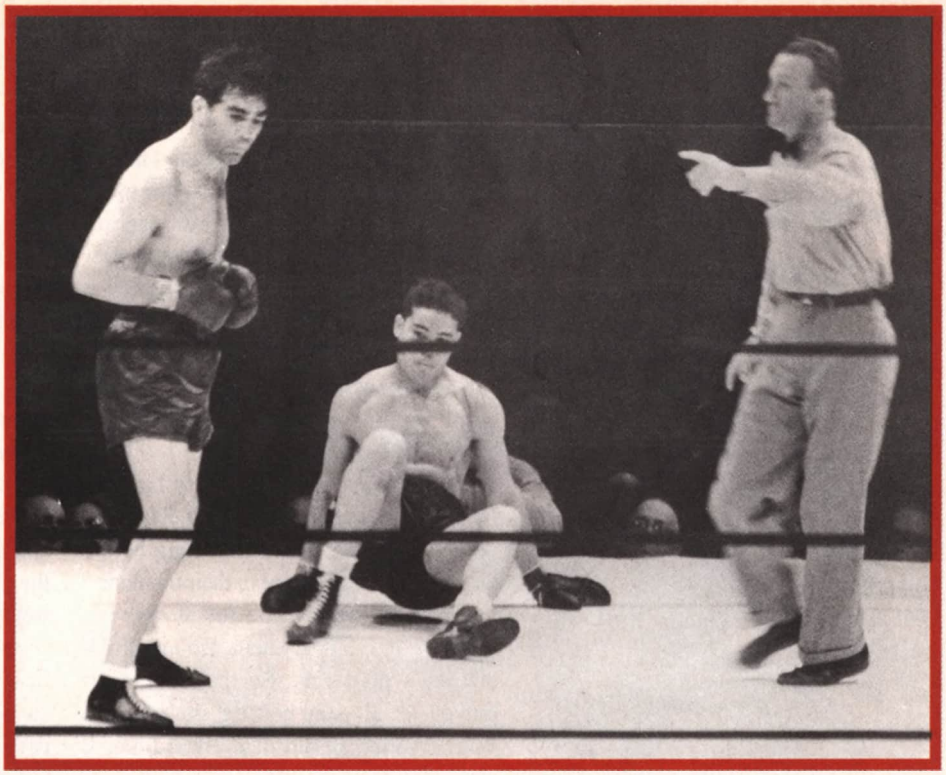
But how about little Charley Mitchell, who gave away weight, height, and reach to the big fellow, and held him to a draw with bare knuckles in 39 rounds, a battle that lasted 3 hours, 10 minutes, and 55 seconds? Excepting Jim Corbett, who deprived Sullivan of his crown, there surely was no tougher obstacle in Sullivan's pugilistic path than "English Charley."

But Sullivan detested Mitchell and liked Kilrain, so the personal motif had a lot to do with his ring rating of the two men. As for Jim Corbett, the Boston slugger always claimed poor condition was responsible for his losing the Battle of New Orleans, and refused to admit that his conqueror belonged in the ranks of great gladiators. Here again, the big fellow was directly influenced by his personal feelings, for he had no use for "Gentleman Jim."

Corbett always frankly admitted that the erstwhile "Boston Terror," who reigned so long as heavyweight champion, was far from being the Sullivan of old when he defeated him, and did not rate the New Orleans battle as a hard test of his ability, compared with other contests, where he was compelled to extend himself

to the limit. Such as the fight, for example, with Joe Choynski on a barge near Benecia, California, in 1889. Corbett won on a clean knockout in the 27th round, but he had to scrap furiously at top-speed every inch of the way to achieve victory, for several times Choynski had him rocking on his feet and perilously close to disaster. Of that affair, Billy Delaney, Corbett's chief second, said it was the fiercest tussle he ever saw, which meant a lot, coming from a man of Delaney's long experience in the game.

Although it was Bob Fitzsimmons who kayoed Corbett and annexed his world's title, Gentleman Jim considered Australia's champion, Peter Jackson, rather than Fitzsimmons or Choynski, the most formidable of his adversaries. Probably Fitz' numerous admirers dissented from this opinion. But it should be remembered that Corbett's personal hatred of Fitzsimmons was closely akin to that of John L. Sullivan's distaste for Charley Mitchell. Corbett was not only put down for the full count, but nursed a bitter feeling of resentment against Fitzsimmons, because Fitzsimmons doggedly refused to accede to the loser's repeated demands for a return match.



Logic suggested that Max Schmeling was actually Louis' hardest foe, since it was "The Black Uhlan" who handed Louis his first defeat, by 12th-round knockout in 1936.

After all, it's natural that the average person should feel the reverse of affection toward a chap who tumbled him from high estate, and there are few exceptions to that rule among the members of the fighting clan. But there are some, and Fitzsimmons was one of the rare breed.

He not only gave Jim Jeffries full credit for twice whipping him decisively via the kayo route, but named "Big Jim" as the toughest of his adversaries and greatest fighter of the age. After Fitz' second defeat, he teamed up with his conqueror and the two toured the country, giving exhibitions and meeting all comers. They were good pals, and never did the ex-champ utter a word of hostile criticism against his conqueror.

George Dixon, who reigned as bantam and featherweight champion in succession through the 1890s, chose Cal McCarthy as the toughest proposition he encountered while milling in the smaller division. McCarthy gave the Negro crack the longest and hardest fight of the latter's spectacular career. That was when they went 70 rounds to a draw at Boston, on February 7, 1890, with two-ounce gloves, for $2,000 a side, extremely high stakes for that period.

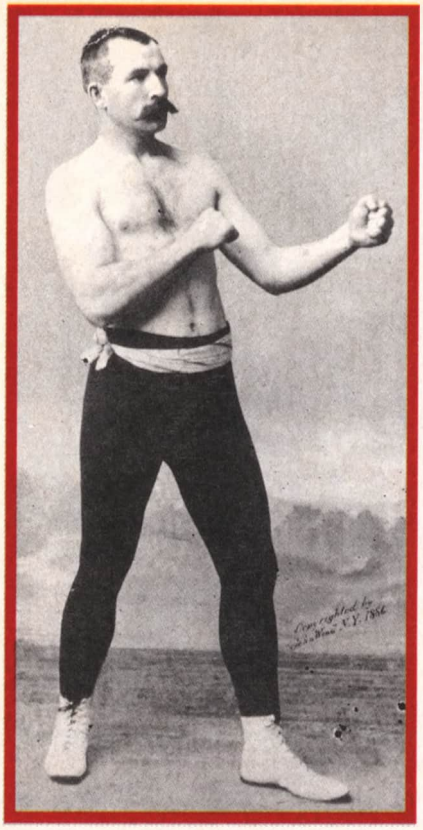
It was a ding-dong, furious fray from bell to bell, each fighting like a human tiger, and there was nothing to choose between them at the finish. McCarthy in his prime was as fast and game a scrapper as ever donned a glove. But being also a Celt of convivial habits, he went the pace that kills outside of the ring. He had consequently gone back a lot when he again tackled Dixon at Troy, New York, on March 31, 1891.

This time the battle was for the bantamweight championship of the world, Dixon having previously beaten Nunc Wallace, the British titleholder, at London, England, before the famous Pelican Club. McCarthy fought desperately from the start. But lack of condition told upon him, his old-time speed was lacking, and Dixon outed him in the 22nd round.

To Terry McGovern, who took the feather title away from Dixon, must be given the classification of the best man Dixon met in that division. Yet the latter, although not given to boasting, was wont to agree with his manager, Tom O'Rourke, that at an earlier stage of his career, he would have had an excellent chance of defeating the "Brooklyn Terror."

Dixon was definitely on the downgrade when he fought McGovern, whereas Terry was at his splendid best. Dixon had been fighting for 11 years. The battle with McGovern was his 118th ring engagement. He was a battle-scarred veteran in the true sense of the phrase, his vitality sapped by the strain of incessant training and punishment sustained in many grueling scraps. McGovern had participated in but 46 battles. After losing the title, Dixon remained in action nearly seven more years and ran his fighting score up to 158 contests.

McGovern kept on boxing a similar length of time, retiring in 1908, with 30 additional bouts to his credit. His record, as compared with Dixon's, was therefore 76 against the Negro lad's 158. In all fairness, it must be conceded that Dixon played a more important role in boxing history than did McGovern. As O'Rourke said, "When George was good, he could always take care of a rusher," and the manager had strong basis for his assertion that under such conditions, Dixon might have made the going too hot for the grand little Brooklyn gladiator.



John L. Sullivan said that Jake Kilrain (pictured) was his toughest challenger, though many felt little Charley Mitchell gave the slugger who "could lick any man in the house" a sterner test.

The chap who gave a champion his toughest battle may still not be the best man the champ has tried conclusions with. That sounds like a paradox, but it's the simple truth. Dixon discovered that fact at one stage of his career.

When Dixon won the world's featherweight title by stopping Jack Skelly at New Orleans in 1892, Tom O'Rourke took the new champion on a countrywide tour, during which Dixon met any local lights who were willing to face him. At Philadelphia, he was matched with another Negro, Walter Edgerton, known in the ring as "The Kentucky Rosebud."

The Bud had no claim then to high rating. Nevertheless, he gave Dixon such a fight that the featherweight king could do no better than break even with his opponent, and the bout was declared a draw.

This was a four-rounder, staged on October 29, 1892, and while O'Rourke was rather surprised by the little champ's failure to best his man, he argued that Dixon merely had an "off night," such as comes to most fighters, and the boxing critics agreed with him. So the manager rematched the lads for another four-frame set-to in the Quaker City. They met in the following month, and O'Rourke sent Dixon in with instructions to hang a kayo on Edgerton as quickly as possible.

Dixon sailed in with all guns blazing. But they fought on even terms right to the final bell, and another draw was announced. Dixon did a little better in their next Philadelphia encounter, when he was awarded a decision after they had gone four rounds on June 30, 1893, but his victory margin was a small one and far from being satisfactory to the featherweight king.

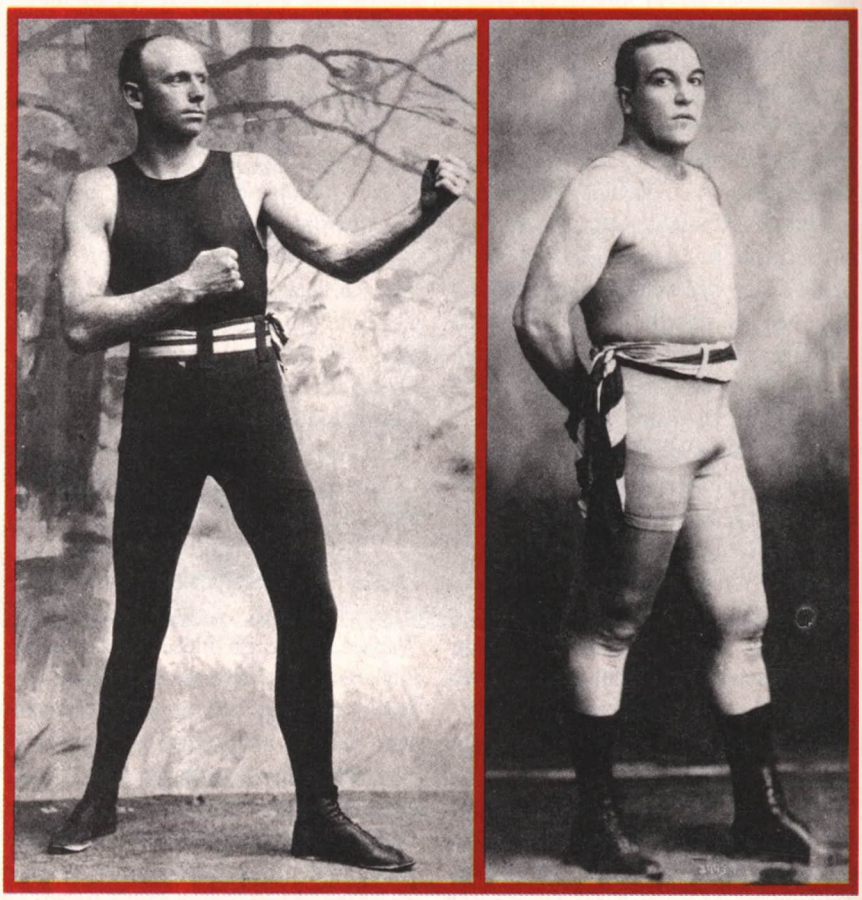
The critics were beginning to hint that Edgerton had the old familiar "Indian sign" on the champ, and it wasn't long before they felt quite confirmed in their opinion.

In 1894, there was a lot of distress, owing to non-employment, among Philadelphia's poor folk. So the Quakerites put on an all-star boxing show at the Winter Circus in aid of a bread fund. It was a big-program affair, with many star pugs volunteering their services in the charitable cause.

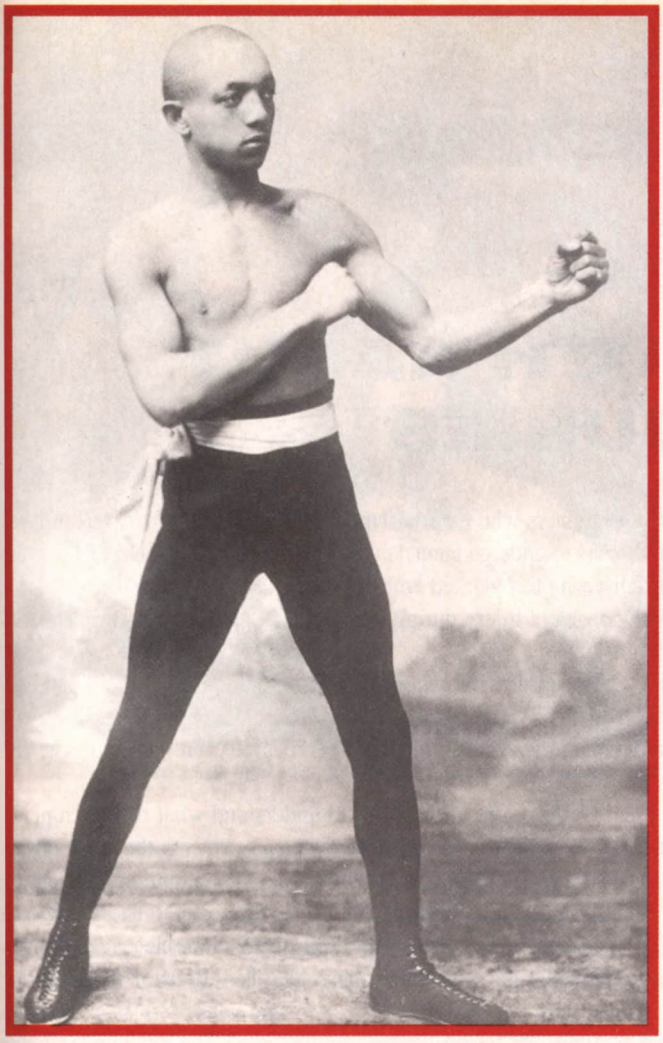
O'Rourke, when approached by the promoters, agreed to have Dixon box a three-round exhibition with The Kentucky Rosebud. The manager would have preferred some other opponent, but could not very well turn down the committee's selection, lest such an action might have provoked comment that Dixon was leery of the boy who had already extended him to the utmost.

For nearly two rounds it was give-and-take, anybody's battle, until a few seconds before the gong. Then suddenly, in a hot exchange, the Bud shot a terrific right to the chin and down went the champion. There was a moment of breathless silence, and then the building shook to the roar of the crowd that saw the peerless featherweight monarch lying limp on the floor.

O'Rourke, pale as the proverbial ghost, rushed into the ring and toted Dixon to his corner. An ammonia whiff brought Dixon round, and he struggled to his feet. O'Rourke pushed him back on his chair, and worked over him vigorously. His wonderful recuperation powers stood him in



Although Bob Fitzsimmons (left) kayoed Jim Corbett for the heavyweight title, "Gentleman Jim" considered Australian champion Peter Jackson as his most formidable adversary. Fitzsimmons, on the other hand, did acknowledge his title conqueror, Jim Jeffries (right), as his toughest foe.



Champions don't always run into their greatest difficulty against their best opponents. After George Dixon (pictured) won the world featherweight title, he had a tremendous amount of trouble against Walter Edgerton, who is nobody's idea of an all-time great.

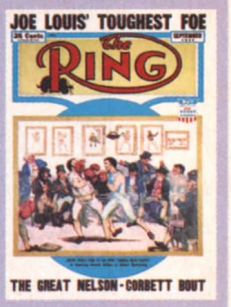
good stead. He recovered from his dazed condition and never fought harder in his life than he did in his attempt to erase the stain from his hitherto flawless record. But there was no getting away from the sad fact that he had been knocked out for the first time in his great career, even if no count had been made over him.

There was no secret about the fact that Dixon's manager brooded plenty over the Philadelphia mishap. To offset in some measure this annoyance, O'Rourke engaged as sparring partner for Dixon one Jack Lynch, who was credited with having defeated the Bud. The former was given theatre billing that read, "Jack Lynch, the man who knocked out the Kentucky Rosebud."

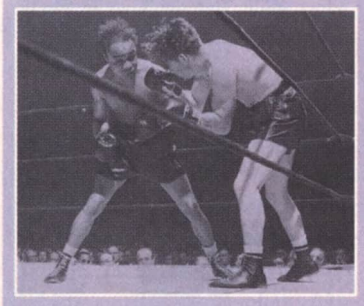
Official records make no mention of such a contest. But whether it occurred, as stated, or not, the show-billing served O'Rourke's purpose, to throw discredit on the slugger who so effectively bopped O'Rourke's chief breadwinner on the jaw.

Dixon retired from the ring in 1906 and died in 1909, aged 38. Seven years later, his ancient foeman and one-time conqueror, the irrepressible Bud, was still cavorting in the ring, disregarding the chilly hand of Father Time, and dealing out sleep-producers. If Walter Edgerton wasn't the toughest guy named in "Little Chocolate's" fighting record, we'd like to know just who was. ■

THE RING, September 1944



***The Cover*:** Although there was no story connected with the cover illustration of "A Sparring Match Before A Select Gathering," there was a major story connected with the headline running across the top of the cover. Heavyweight champ Joe Louis revealed, to the surprise of many, that his toughest foe was a man he'd vanquished with apparent ease, Max Baer.



***Henry Armstrong's Weak Opposition*:** Henry Armstrong, the only fighter in history to hold three titles at one time, was severely criticized for taking on light opposition on the heels of a two-round victory over Al "Bummy" Davis. Armstrong rebounded from a loss to Willie Joyce by stopping Davis, "a dumb fighter whose only asset to fame has been a good left hook," according to the story.

***Helping Out*:** With World War II raging, boxers did more than their share to help the war effort on the home front. Across the country, fighters like former light heavyweight champion Melio Bettina (middle) put on exhibition bouts and refereed fights to drum up financial support for the armed forces.

***Battling Nelson's Surprise Victory*:** As the legendary Battling Nelson turned 62, THE RING looked back on his famous 1904 bout with Young Corbett. Nelson was a 2-1 underdog when he stopped Corbett in the 10th round in San Francisco. Nelson would later go on to win the world lightweight title.

***Zivic Lost His Zip*:** RING editor Nat Fleischer made a note in his column on the decline of former welterweight king Fritzie Zivic, a private in the Army who fought when on furlough or 48-hour leave. Fleischer implored Zivic to give it up, since he was now "an awkward, slow moving man" and no longer a formidable fighter.

THE FIGHT DOCTOR

THE TRUTH ABOUT EYE INJURIES

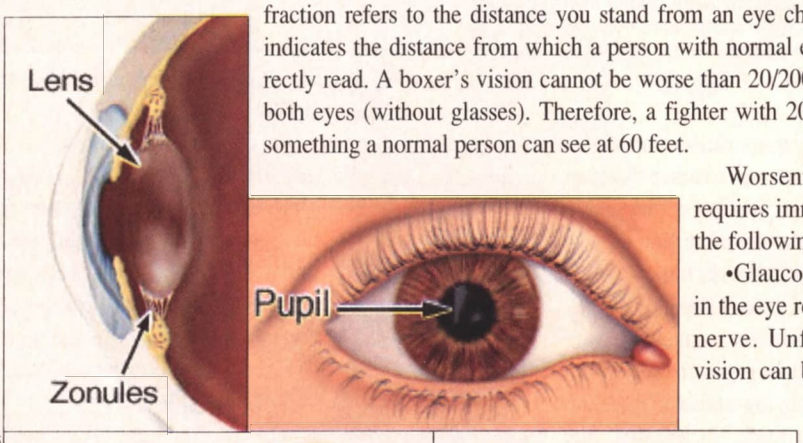
By Margaret Goodman, MD

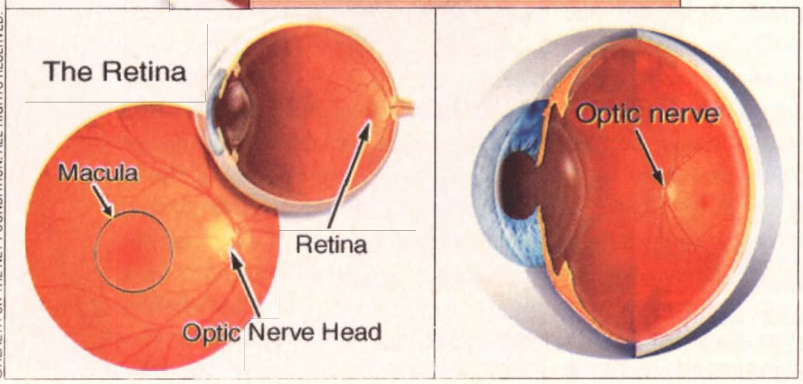
Despite an array of prominent fighters who have suffered eye injuries, less than half of boxing commissions require boxers to undergo annual eye exams. According to Dr. Jeff Parker, a Las Vegas retinal specialist who has worked with boxers for more than 20 years, "Up to 85 percent of boxers suffer some sort of eye injury during their career, and must undergo a yearly dilated exam with an ophthalmologist."

Before going any further, let me explain the difference between an optometrist and an ophthalmologist: An optometrist (OD) is, typically, the doctor one sees for eyeglasses. Although there are many excellent ODs, an ophthalmologist (carrying a M.D. or D.O. degree) can more consistently diagnose eye problems.

It's also important to know the different parts of the eye and understand what role each plays in the way we see. The cornea is a transparent surface that covers and protects the front of the eye. The pupil allows light into the eye, while the colorful iris controls the amount of light entering. The lens (very much like the lens in a camera) focuses light on the retina. The retina is a thin layer of nerve cells lining the back of the eye. It changes light images into electrical impulses. These impulses are then carried via the optic nerve (a thick cable of millions of wires) to the brain for interpretation.

We all hear that normal visual acuity is 20/20. But what does that mean? The top number in the fraction refers to the distance you stand from an eye chart (usually 20 feet). The bottom number indicates the distance from which a person with normal eyesight could read the same line you correctly read. A boxer's vision cannot be worse than 20/200 in each eye (without glasses) or 20/60 in both eyes (without glasses). Therefore, a fighter with 20/60 vision must stand 20 feet away from something a normal person can see at 60 feet.





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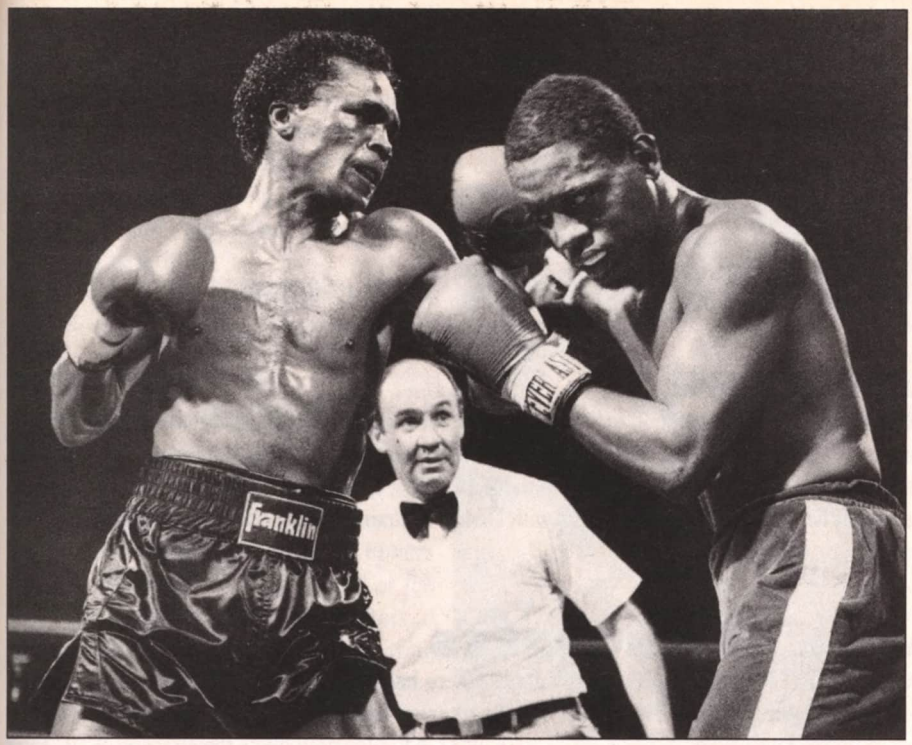
Worsening visual acuity in a fighter is serious, requires immediate assessment, and may be caused by the following problems:

•Glaucoma is a blockage of the drainage channels in the eye resulting in increased pressure on the optic nerve. Unfortunately, as much as 40 percent of vision can be permanently lost before symptoms are experienced.

•Cataracts can happen in boxers from trauma or steroid use, and refers to a clouding of vision over the lens blocking light entry.

•A corneal abrasion is a scratch on the eye's protective covering and can come from a punch or the glove. If ignored, it may lead to permanent damage or infection.

•Retinal detachment, holes, or tears refer to where the back of the eyeball detaches, and fluid leaks from inside the



In Leonard's first fight after eye surgery, he came off the deck to stop Kevin Howard

eyeball under the tear (like wallpaper coming off a wall). It is often painless with loss of peripheral vision. Other symptoms include dark floaters or bright flashes of light. More than 90 percent of retinal reattachments are successful if treated within the first seven days.

In the important area of evaluating visual fields, each eyeball is examined as if it were the face of a clock separated into four quadrants. In this manner, the doctor determines a pattern of visual loss. Depending upon the distribution, visual field loss can point to a problem with the eye itself or damage to the brain. Unequal pupils can result from direct injury to the eyeball or signify brain injury. Both of these conditions require an immediate brain MRI or CT scan. Each eyeball is moved in various directions (up, down, sideways) by six eye muscles surrounding the globe of the eye.

Double vision in a fighter can be from trauma to the eye muscles, nerves moving the muscles, eye socket, or the brain.

Before a fight, in addition to reviewing an ophthalmologist's report, the ring physician must make certain the fighter has not had recent eye surgery or trauma, pay special attention to fighters with prior cuts around the eyes, and insure the fighter can adequately see out of *both* eyes. All of this must be done using an ophthalmoscope, which is a hand-held battery-powered light source. During the fight, the doctor must make certain the fighter's vision is intact and that the fighter can protect himself from punches in all directions, especially in the case of swelling around the eye socket. Postfight, a fighter must always be sent to the hospital for *any* visual symptom, as the eye cannot be fully examined ringside.

For boxers, the time necessary to recover form eye surgery varies, depending on the procedure. Cataract surgery can require four months' healing time. Retinal holes or tears, if treated with a laser procedure or insertion of specialized gas bubbles to press the retina back, can require as little as one month off. Sugar Ray Leonard was among the first boxers allowed to return to the ring after having surgery for a retinal detachment he received during his 1981 fight with Tommy Hearns. Prior to that time, a fighter had to retire. Today, successful retinal reattachment surgery usually needs at least four months before a boxer can resume sparring, and clearance by an ophthalmologist before *every* fight.

LASIK surgery, a common laser procedure to permanently change the shape of the cornea, thereby reducing dependency on glasses and contact lenses, may need only a few weeks to heal. In the case of any eye surgery, however, the fighter must strictly follow the recommendations of the eye surgeon to avoid poor healing or infection.

In Nevada (and most other jurisdictions that require annual eye exams), boxers will be suspended or permanently retired if they have: poor visual acuity/blindness, limited visual fields, severe glaucoma, lens abnormalities (lens implants), irreparable retinal damage, double vision, or any other condition limiting the fighter from safely engaging in unarmed combat activity.

Finally, it's crucial to know when a shiner is more than a superficial bruise. A shiner resolves after seven to 10 days. If a boxer is experiencing persistent swelling around the eye, double vision, blurred vision, difficulty in turning the eyeball, the eyeball looks sunken, or the boxer is seeing flashing lights, he/she should see an ophthalmologist as soon as possible.

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ASSOCIATION OF BOXING COMMISSIONS UPDATE: On July 20-23, the Association of Boxing Commissions (ABC) met in Charleston, South Carolina, for their annual convention. Attendees included commissioners, executive directors, deputy attorneys general, and ringside physicians from more than 30 jurisdictions.

Among the resolutions passed:

•The ABC developed a means whereby a boxer may ask the ABC to appoint an arbitration panel to hear their complaint regarding their sanctioning organization rating. The decision will be final if both parties so agree.

•The ABC now requires that sanctioning organizations rank all top fighters, not just those "available" to fight for their titles.

•The ABC passed a resolution that requires a boxer to wait a minimum of seven days between bouts.

•The ABC developed a means whereby a boxer or commission may seek arbitration regarding a medical suspension.

•The ABC approved a manual on the regulation of world title fights. This will allow each commission to regulate a world title fight in the same manner. ■

Dr. Goodman will be happy to answer questions about the medical aspects of boxing in future columns. Please send inquiries to: The Fight Doctor, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

COME OUT WRITING

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

SAD ENDING

What a sad way for the Mike Tyson story to end, bankrupt and having to fight on to pay off his creditors at the age of 38. He looked in good shape for three rounds, but time caught up with him in the fourth when Danny Williams smashed him to the floor. What a sad figure Tyson looked like, slumped on the ropes. If he can't even go four rounds with Danny Williams, then it's time to give it up.

MATT TAYLOR
Leicester City, England

A VOTE FOR MORALES

Since Antonio Tarver knocked out Roy Jones, there has been much debate about who the new pound-for-pound king should be, Floyd Mayweather or Bernard Hopkins. The answer is Erik Morales. With his latest victory over Carlos Hernandez, Morales now owns the IBF and WBC super featherweight titles and improves his record to 47-1 (34). His only loss was to living legend Marco Antonio Barrera in their controversial rematch.

Morales is one of two Mexican-born fighters to win titles in three different weight divisions, the first being Julio Cesar Chavez, and when it comes to action and excitement, Morales rates right up there with Arturo Gatti. Bernard Hopkins has ruled the middleweights for a decade now, but let's face it, it's not even close to the middleweight division that was once home to Jake LaMotta, Ray Robinson, Ray Leonard, and Marvin Hagler. I agree with Nigel Collins that Mayweather is not consistent enough to be P-4-P king, and while THE RING is my favorite boxing publication and I will always be a loyal subscriber, I think its pound-for-pound ratings need a closer inspection.

JEFF WOLFORD
thunderfan13@yahoo.com

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Erik Morales jolts Carlos Hernandez' head sideways with an uppercut en route to a unanimous 12-round decision victory. Reader Jeff Wolford believes that Morales deserves to be number one pound-for-pound. The Mexican crowd-pleaser is currently number six on THE RING's P-4-P list.

HOOKED FOR LIFE

Thanks for including Mike Weaver-John Tate fight in the "One Punch & It's Over: A Half-Century Of Memorable Knockouts" article in the October 2004 issue of THE RING EXTRA. That was the fight that hooked me on boxing for life. Before that night, I knew of Ali from *Wide World Of Sports*, but being Canadian, hockey was my life. I knew of neither Weaver nor Tate beforehand, but picked Weaver from the onset because of his physique. For 14 rounds, I watched and waited. Then the world's best sport delivers. *Boom!* It's over!

DON McMILLAN
Sarnia, Ontario

COVER COVERAGE

I loved the tribute you guys did about THE RING covers in THE RING DOUBLE, Volume 1, 2004 ("THE RING Classic Covers:

A Decade-By-Decade Look At Boxing History") As an artist, I appreciate the diverse drawing styles of Stanley Weston and my favorite, C.R. Schaare. From a nostalgic point of view, I want to vote for the Hearns-holding-a-machinegun cover or the Hagler cover, but how could the number-one cover not be, from an aesthetic and historical perspective, the Joe Louis cover, August 1937? It's simply beautiful.

AARON BAYLEY
Toronto, Ontario

DOCTOR KNOWS BEST

I have to agree with what Dr. Margaret Goodman wrote in her "Fight Doctor" column (October 2004) concerning when a boxer should retire. I wish more boxers would retire a little too early instead of too late. This is precisely why I have mixed feelings about Felix Trinidad's upcoming comeback. Selfishly, I look forward to watching the great Trinidad return. He will bring excitement and entertainment to the boxing world. But how long will he continue? Hopefully, not too long. I don't want to see "Tito" as a steppingstone for younger fighters, or get beaten into poor health.

RICKY FLANAGAN
House Springs, MO

OVERDOING ALI

What is with ESPN? Why is that whenever they show a classic fight, it's always a Muhammad Ali fight? Don't they have a huge collection of thousands of fights? How many times do we need to see Ali-George Foreman or Ali-Joe Frazier? A message for ESPN: There are other fighters besides Ali. Show some old Evander Holyfield fights, or some Julio Cesar Chavez fights. Something that doesn't involve Ali.

JEREMY GUERRIERI
Concord, OH

REMEMBERING SONNY BOY

I would like some information about a fighter called Sonny Boy West. He was killed in a boxing match in the 1950s. I want to know because he was either a relative or friend of my family.

CATHERINE GARNER
Oxon Hill, MD

[Editor's note: Alfred "Sonny Boy" West was a popular Baltimore, Maryland, lightweight who turned pro in 1946. West beat a number of top-notch fighters, including Sammy Angott, Teddy "Red Top" Davis, and Eddie Giosa. West died as a result of head injuries suffered in a seventh-round knockout loss to Percy Bassett on December 20, 1950, at St. Nicholas Arena in New York City. The bout was televised by CBS. West was only 21 the time of his death, with an overall pro record of 45-8-1 (14). Early the following year, Bassett headed a benefit card that raised more than $17,000 for West's wife and two children.]

Al "Sonny Boy" West was a popular Baltimore lightweight who died as a result of injuries suffered in a 1950 bout in New York City. Reader Catherine Garner requested some info on West, as she thinks there might be a link between the fighter and her family.

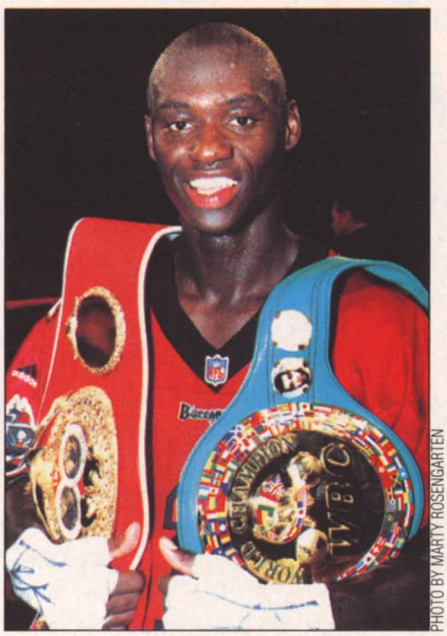


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Not only can light heavyweight champion Antonio Tarver fight, he has the sort of personality that goes over well with fans. Reader Ron Zorzes writes to say how impressed he was when he saw "The Magic Man" interviewed on ESPN2.

RUMBLE REVISITED

I must vent and express my frustration on revisionists who have completely given a false representation on what occurred during the famous 1974 heavyweight title fight between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman in Zaire.

The revisionists, in such documentaries as ESPN *Sportscentury*, or the films *When We Were Kings* and *Ali*, basically give the myth that as soon as Ali chose to go to the ropes in the second round, he was battered and beaten. Then as Foreman tired around the fourth or fifth round, Ali started to come on strong and then stopped Foreman in the eighth round. The question I would like to pose to these people is, did you guys actually watch the fight?

As soon as Ali went to the ropes, he was successful at countering Foreman's wide, winging punches. While Foreman did some good work to the body, most of the shots to the head did not land. I am not saying that Ali did not take his share of punishment, but Ali was dishing out plenty in return. And this started to occur not after Foreman started to tire, but as soon as Ali began the "rope-a-dope." He landed clean, straight punches to Foreman's face in every single round of the fight.

ERIC WONG
San Francisco, CA

TOUTING TARVER

I was not only impressed, but also rather awed by Antonio Tarver's interview and by the man himself when he was a recent guest on ESPN2's *Tuesday Night Fights*. Tarver is eloquent, witty, always smiling, and seems like a superb individual. I wish him every possible future success. He is what the sport needs, and I think he can prove to be very charismatic. Let's hope he keeps his wits about him.

RON ZORZES
Thunder Bay, Ontario ■

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

PPV TIMES THREE

Start saving your pennies, boxing fans. (Keep spending them on THE RING, of course, but try to cut corners everywhere else.) If you want to see all the fights, it's going to be an expensive end to the year.

According to HBO Sports Senior Vice President **Mark Taffet**, all signs point to HBO Pay-Per-View distributing two PPV shows in November and one in December during a late-year flurry in which there will be major fights on TV nearly every weekend.

"**Chris Byrd** and **Jameel McCline** want to fight. **John Ruiz** and **Andrew Golota** want to fight. **Erik Morales** wants to fight. **Marco Antonio Barrera** wants to fight. They all want to fight," said Taffet in mid-August. "If I had to bet, I'd say it's all going to happen. It's going to be a November to remember, and it's almost certain there will be a pay-per-view show in December as well."

Taffet: Busy finish to '04

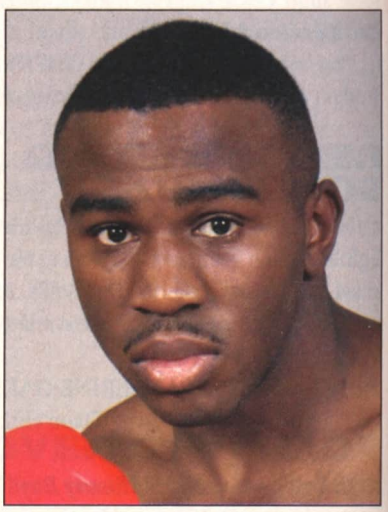
As of press time, here's how those shows appeared to be shaping up. The November 13 date belongs to **Don King**, and DK's matchmaker, **Eric Bottjer**, says plans are going ahead for the Byrd-McCline and Ruiz-Golota heavyweight fights to happen on that night. King is also hoping to put **Hasim Rahman**, **James Toney**, and **Lamon Brewster** on the show (with the latter two possibly facing each other), meaning seven of THE RING's top 10 heavyweight contenders could be in action on that card.

Promoters Top Rank (Morales) and Golden Boy (Barrera) both want PPV dates in November as well—and Taffet wouldn't mind seeing Barrera-Morales III to satisfy both ends. In a month already heavy with rematches (**Kostya Tszyu-Sharmba Mitchell** II on November 6 on Showtime, **Winky Wright-Shane Mosley** II on November 20 on HBO), that rubber match looks like the biggest attraction of them all. It could come on November 27, and Los Angeles' Staples Center is in the running to host.

Meanwhile, Main Events is hoping to get **Arturo Gatti** another fight this year, and that might mean a December bout, on pay-per-view, against **Jesse James Leija** in Texas, with Lone Star State favorites **Juan Diaz** and **Rocky Juarez** on the undercard. As of press time, however, discussions regarding that show were in the very early stages.

LISTEN UP

October isn't without its own attractive shows. Going up against the **Felix Trinidad-Ricardo Mayorga** pay-per-view, Showtime is presenting a tripleheader on October 2. The nominal main event is actually the least significant fight on the card, as **Wladimir Klitschko** will jump from HBO and try to get back on track against **DaVarryl Williamson** in a battle of tall heavyweights with big punches and bad chins. The draw for hardcore fans is the rematch between junior middleweights **Kassim Ouma** and **Verno Phillips**, who made an outstanding action fight three years ago and have both raised their games since. And rounding out the tripleheader will be 2000 Olympian **Jeff Lacy** facing by far his greatest test when he meets **Syd Vanderpool** for a vacant super middleweight belt ... If we can believe anything promoter **Frank Warren** announces anymore (you may recall he announced both **Ricky Hatton-Vivian Harris** and **Audley Harrison-Matthew Skelton** without having either deal done), then we can believe that heavyweight contender **Danny Williams** is set for his first fight after stopping **Mike Tyson**, and it will be in London on October 9 against **Oleg Maskaev**. Meanwhile, Hatton, having seen negotiations for the Harris fight fail, is scheduled to fight October 1 against **Mike Stewart** ... Early discussions for Showtime's December 4 show have centered around **Diego Corrales'** possible follow-up to his knockout win over **Acelino Freitas**. As of our press deadline, no opponent had been mentioned. ■



Lacy: Diving into the deep end of the (Vander)pool

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